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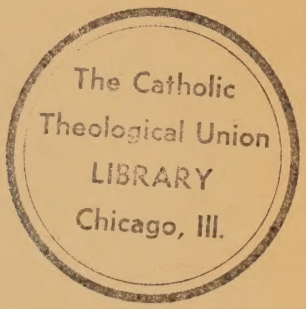
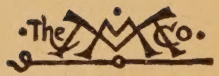
STUDIO ADDICTUS
Province of Holy Cross



AS MAN TO MAN



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TORONTO

AS MAN TO MAN

THE ADVENTURES OF A COMMUTER

WITHDRAWN

BY

CONDÉ B. PALLEN

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AS MAN TO MAN

AS MAN TO MAN

MAKING ACQUAINTANCES

"May I share this seat, Sir?"

The voice was pleasant. I looked up and nodded. "With pleasure, Sir."

I gathered up the newspaper that I had placed upon the vacant seat beside me. It was on the 8:30, my usual train into the city. Let it be understood that I am what is called a commuter, who may be defined as a person who reads newspapers morning and evening on trains between the city and his suburban dormitory. I sleep in the country, earn my sustenance in the city, and live nowhere, for my twenty-four hours are so divided that I have time only to exist. The sentiment of this definition may seem a bit cynical, but it is not really mine. I am only quoting out of the mouth of a fellow commuter who carries about a permanent grouch, because he insists upon devoting all his time to making money and doesn't make it. He keeps constantly telling me that when he *does* succeed in wresting from the Mammon of Iniquity the elusive fortune of his dreams, he intends to retire into the city, buy a "swell" apartment on the twenty-first floor, sleep late into the day, move around at his leisure morning, noon and evening, and "be damned to trains." Meantime, he keeps up the strenuous job of commuting in the picturesque hope of finally picking up that bag of gold at the end of the rainbow.

STUDIO ADDICTUS
Province of Holy Cross

"Beautiful weather we are having," remarked the owner of the pleasant voice, as he seated himself next to me.

He was a man of about fifty, I judged. His face had the settled look of one who has attained his majority. The law says that we reach our majority at twenty-one, a ridiculous error, like so many others that the law makes when it seeks to enact precepts for the guidance of human nature. Twenty-one is still the age of infantile innocence, with the arduous ascent of the unknown mountain of experience in the far distance, and with the softness of tender youth still a thing of solicitude to parent or guardian. The old Romans knew better. With them a man didn't really arrive until thirty-five, the middle term of life, *Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita,* as Dante puts it, when he was just beginning to enter upon the great journey, whose traveling was yet to reveal to him the real meaning of life.

The other extreme in opposition to the twenty-one illusion is the Osler superlative that after forty a man should be laid on the shelf. I imagine that the scientific way of really effectively carrying out the Oslerite apothegm would be to hit fortyiters over the head with a club and then turn them over to the dissecting room; useless material should not encumber the earth. I understand that some savage tribes entertain utilitarian notions of this kind, and dispatch their elderly folk after this lethal fashion to the happy hunting grounds or whithersoever they imagine useless people go after life's fitful fever has been summarily smothered out.

But as a matter of fact, the wisdom both of the Ancients and the Middle Ages is dead against the

impatience of Oslerism. A man at forty is just about beginning to find himself—beginning, I say advisedly, for it takes something like twenty years more to reach that coign of vantage whence he may survey the perspective of life's experience and focus it to a modicum of wisdom. I do not lay this down as a hard and fast rule. Some may arrive there a bit before their fourscore, but on the average it takes sixty years for a man to arrive at his fully matured majority. I am not speaking of women here, for as Heaven knows, they "intue" at any age. They don't have to arrive: they have arrived as soon as they open their sage eyes upon this rickety old world. Some men may be slower and arrive at threescore and ten, and others again may never arrive: which would seem to confirm the popular adage that "there's no fool like an old fool."

Now, I wasn't ruminating all this as I looked into the settled face of my finally ensconced fellow passenger, who was sharing my commuting privilege of the 8:30 that morning. This bit of moralizing or philosophizing is only an afterthought for the delectation of the reader, unless he be of the kind who carries about a perennial grouch against being delectated, for there are some people so cross-grained that they are as averse to being delectated as they are to being electrocuted. These are the only people who should be Oslerized. Blessings on them for an expeditious exit to the happy hunting grounds, which they have not found the hither side of life's bourn.

As I just now said, my traveling companion with the pleasant voice remarked just after he sat down, "Beautiful weather we are having." I assented readily, for we were having a spell of beautiful October

gladness, the sunshine and the changing foliage outside making a riot of magnificent color rushing by in the sliding landscape as we glided onward through the golden autumn in our linked steel chariot, which the R. R. people prosily designate No. 251, leaving our station 8:30 A. M., and arriving at the city terminal 9:30 A. M.

Now my fellow sitter's remark was nothing unusual. Indeed, it was somewhat commonplace, but most apt. If he had said to me, "My wife was in a dreadful humor this morning," I should have been much embarrassed; or if he had said, "Betelgeuse is all gas in spite of its magnitude," I should have been bewildered. The gratuitous bit of domestic intimacy would not have been common ground between us, and the recondite information about Betelgeuse would have been an impertinent challenge to the bankruptcy of my astronomical knowledge. As it was, he approached me upon that commonest of all ground open to every son of Adam—the weather—a perennial and fruitful topic of introductory conversation which kings and street-cleaners alike may indulge in with full assurance and unassailable courage.

It showed excellent breeding on the part of my fellow commuter (I took it for granted that he belonged to the guild, or else why should he be on No. 251 at 8:30 in the morning?) and a most human consideration for a stranger. His remark elicited my immediate confidence. So we chatted along about the weather, its uncertainty, its variations and our divers experiences of good and bad seasons here, there and otherwhere, as time and travel had happened to shift us about the surface of this sublunar sphere. Now the advantage in talking about the weather in a pristine

conversation (pristine, inasmuch as it is a first or opening intercourse between two talking creatures) is that it naturally paves the way to talking about places, where weather experiences usually occur, and then from places to persons, for one generally meets persons in places, and when one arrives at persons, one begins skirting the region of intimacies, and, presto, there is a magically forged friendly link (for we soon find that we have common friends) between two chance interlocutors on No. 251 on a wonderful October morning.

So it was that I first met Trevis. (I do not give his real name for obvious reasons that will appear later in this chronicle of adventure.) It was by chance we met—chance, we call it, but Providence weaves what seem to us casual filaments in the looms of time too delicate for our eyes to see, yet binding as cables of steel, as it turned out in our case. He was a gentleman of the old school, rare nowadays, in whom the true jewels of simplicity and sincerity shone luminously in a richly chased setting of courtesy.

We started with the weather and ended in an embryo friendship, which I am rejoiced to say afterward grew and blossomed into a mutual regard and was only interrupted by the barrier we call death. Interrupted, I say, because I believe that I will meet him again where there will be no death.

When I think over that first meeting, I recall that it was his voice that first attracted me. I said that it was a pleasant voice. It was that and more. It was a rich and mellow voice, modulated, contained, and I would say cultivated, had it not been so natural. When we say cultivated there is a suspicion of the artificial, and there was not a single fiber of Trevis' heart and soul that wasn't as genuine as virgin gold. His voice

and his manner were in keeping, and he had that indefinable thing called charm. What charm is no one knows, but everyone feels. If it could be put into words, it might be called the perfume and bloom of character, the subtle exhalation of all those qualities which make for graciousness.

John Trevis was one of the few men I ever met who was not afraid to talk of religion. It is a singular thing how universally taboo religion is in conversation nowadays. Men will talk about everything but the one thing that *is* everything, for religion is in fact the foundation and firmament of life, the solid ground we walk on and the shining heavens which light our way. For the truth of this, all you have to do is to take religion out of life, and then picture to yourself humanity left utterly and supremely to its own devices. I believe that most people avoid religious discussions because they have only opinions and no profound convictions on religion, and opinions on fundamental things are breeders of acrimonious arguments. Opinions have no ultimate logical ground to rest on and depend upon the cleverness or acumen of their proponents. To uphold them against opposition becomes a matter of personal pride and engenders the lust of victory. Hence a clash of wits and the activities of conflict.

There is also a common notion that every man is entitled to his own opinion, and if religion be a matter of opinion, albeit it is a very fundamental thing, better leave it alone, especially when it makes for bitter contention. So when religion happens to be broached in conversation you will find most people dodging the issue.

My friend Trevis was different. He had the most

open mind of any man I ever met, that is, he had fewer prejudices, and when light shone he never sealed his eye with his own conceits. The vanity of his own opinion never clouded his judgment. A rare man, you will say, and I agree with you. It may be that I am a bit prejudiced in his favor. But, you must remember, I *knew* him.

Now it happened that during part of my commuting years I was in a peculiar position regarding religious conversation. It may seem strange, but I was looked upon by many of my fellow commuters as a sort of reservoir of a certain kind of religious information, to be tapped when convenient. So I was often tapped, and being of an affable disposition responded good-naturedly, and I confess rather to my own enjoyment, for I was usually asked and not argued with. Indeed, I made it a proviso that I would never *argue* a point, but only *elucidate* it for the benefit of my questioner—a condition, however, which had its exceptions.

I was often interrogated upon religious matters because I happened to be one of the editors of an encyclopedic work on religion, and I was supposed to be a sort of walking encyclopedia upon such topics as the work in question treated. I was looked upon as a sort of well of information into which any curious person might drop his bucket and pull it up full. I enjoyed therefore the privilege of being regarded as one teaching with authority. I mean only that I was usually credited with knowing what I was talking about, and not that my listener was convinced of the objective truth of what I was saying. The fact was that my interlocutor usually wanted simply to get my viewpoint but not to accept it. If, for instance, I was asked—as I have been asked—what a Cardinal is,

I was simply being pumped for information, not that the questioner believed in Cardinals or wanted to believe in them. A Cardinal is usually a mysterious person who wears red and is in some enigmatical way attached to the Pope. The newspapers would report that a consistory was held—what a consistory was would, of course, be a concomitant inquiry—and the red hat would be conferred upon so and so. I would, of course, proceed to enlighten my questioner to the best of my ability.

One question would naturally lead to another, one bucket after another would be lowered into the well and come up, as far as the well was able, satisfactorily full. I was an "easy mark," but I enjoyed it, and I may say with due modesty, I never felt any particular uneasiness, no matter how curiously my questioner probed, for I was fairly well up in my subject, and I was profoundly confident that my questioner was not. You see, he came to me in ignorance on the supposition that I was a pundit in that special line.

There were times, though not often, when my questioner was not so anxious to know as to controvert. On such occasions I declined to argue and frankly declared that I would be pleased to elucidate, which I always did with such emphasis as suited the occasion.

To scrap with a deliberately pugnacious inquirer is a waste of time, and if one finds oneself in a situation where one is driven to it, hold him firmly to the rules of the game, *i.e.*, to stick to the question, for he is usually of the kind that wants to fight outside the ring and hit below the belt as often as he can. The better way is to decline a prize-fight. Even if you best such an adversary, you only sour and exacerbate him, and in the end you will find yourself ruffled and

exasperated at having wasted yourself on what in Socratic irony might be defined as a featherless biped. Such occasions have been happily not so numerous in my experience, and conversations on religion, which have happened to come my way, have usually been conducted without broken bones or any considerable bruises.

A CALVINIST vs. INDULGENCES

Among my commuting friends was a man by the name of Patterson. He was a man of sterling character, a bit dour and Calvinistic in religion, in which he stood invincible. He was very frank and direct in his speech, a very commendable trait. He liked me personally, he once told me, but had no use for my "Romanism." Nevertheless, we got along fairly well together.

He liked to talk religion, on which subject he was both argumentative and tremendously positive. He was like Rhoderick Dhu: "This rock shall fly from its firm base as soon as I." Had he been a Catholic, he would have rejoiced in the Rock of Peter, with which he would no doubt have identified himself as a constituent part. As it was, he abhorred the Rock of Peter and believed in Scotch granite, for he was of Scotch ancestry. His people had come to Canada, and thence he had come to the United States, but refused to be naturalized. He preferred to remain a Britisher, a thing I have observed in most Britishers in this country, save Irishmen, who hasten to slough the British as soon as they land in this country and become policemen and politicians, a proceeding I heartily endorse, for they make the best in the world.

Patterson always sought me out on trains; without success, if I saw him first. For I soon learned that religious discussion with him was a waste of breath, and it was religion he always insisted on talking.

After two experiences I laid down the law to him: that I would not argue with him, but that if he really wanted information I would be pleased to *elucidate,* as best I was able, anything about "Romanism" which might serve to clear up his misunderstandings or his prejudices. He was a blunt customer, so I blunted him back. After that we got along fairly well.

One morning he plumped down alongside of me; the seat happened to be vacant. "Good morning, Mr. Editor," he greeted me. "Mr. Editor" was his favorite way of saluting me on such occasions, and I knew I was in for an elucidation.

"How is the great work getting along?" He alluded, of course, to the Encyclopedia on which I was engaged.

"Very well, thank you. We have just finished our eighth volume, including the letter 'I.'"

"The letter 'I', eh?" he said; and then, "I suppose that takes in the article on indulgences?"

"Naturally," I answered. "I believe 'indulgences' is spelt with an 'i,' both in English and in Latin."

"To be sure, to be sure," said Patterson. He was a very literal man. He really thought I was trying to tell him how "indulgence" was spelled. A primrose was a primrose to him, and nothing more.

"That's the doctrine that Romanism went to smash on," and he looked at me with a saturnine smile. I could see that he had designs on me that morning. Luther and the "sale of indulgences" was evidently in his mind, and he was prepared to demolish the Romanist before we reached the city.

Now, one's natural inclination under that sort of provocation by a pugilistic aggressor (a "bruiser," as he is termed in barbaric circles) is to square off and slug him (another unvarnished gladiatorial phrase). But

I had had my experience, and even if I battered him into a metaphorical jelly it would have done him no good and meant a barren victory for me, a mere personal triumph. In such encounters I had learned that to beat a foe into submission was to make him an even bitterer enemy. Now, Patterson was honest at bottom, and a fighter who loved battle. He believed thoroughly in his own ignorance, that is, what he didn't know he was supremely convinced was unknowable. The only way to win out in such a case is to let your opponent win for you without his realizing it. In this way he is not left sore and ugly.

"Before going into the question of how Romanism was smashed by the doctrine of Indulgences, which involves a good deal of intricate history and some theology, why not ask ourselves what is an indulgence?"

"Well, what is it?" belligerently asked Patterson.

"Suppose you define it," I answered.

"That's easy," he said. "Everybody knows what it is. It's buying a permission to commit a sin. You Romanists give the priest some money and he absolves you beforehand."

It was what I had expected, a brutal and vulgar distortion of the fact, but a view commonly held by non-Catholics, who have sucked it into their blood from the tradition of generations. It makes one gasp to hear a sober man in all seriousness attribute so gross a practice to another sober man. It is a riddle which one would give up, if one did not understand the perversity of human nature. There is, of course, an explanation. It is that a constantly reiterated statement through generations can become a fixed and almost ineradicable prejudice, especially when the

statement has become a defensive justification of an indefensible religious revolt. For the "sale of indulgences" is a popular Protestant tradition and was the principal cause of the Reformation and the heroic Luther's valiant defiance of Rome. So the doctrine of Indulgences has come down in the Protestant popular mind as the monstrous thing to which my friend Patterson gave utterance. He believed it to be what he defined it. He had always heard it that way. Like a rust in metal, it had eaten into his religious make-up, and was an integral part of his Protestantism.

"That's a horrible idea and a monstrous practice, what you have just defined," said I.

"It is," he said complacently. "How do you defend it?"

"I don't," I replied. "I repudiate it as an unmitigated calumny. Just a moment," as he was about to interrupt me, "I am not going to argue with you. I will elucidate the doctrine of Indulgences as Catholics hold it, if you care to listen. If you don't care to listen, we will stop right here."

"Well, everybody knows that's what an indulgence means. I have heard it that way all my life." There was a bit of truculence in his tone.

"Hold your horses, Patterson. They are running away with you. Did you ever stop to reflect that what you have heard all your life may not necessarily be true?"

He started to interrupt again, but I shut him off peremptorily. I was determined by this time to force him to the root of the matter.

"First of all, I would like you to understand that you have insulted me in a way that a Hottentot in the south of Africa would have answered, if he under-

stood you, by knocking you down. You have attributed to me a belief and a practice that is so atrociously immoral that you yourself would blush to have perpetrated the accusation, if you realized its blackguardism. But as you have no conception of the grossness of the offense, I will pass it over. Let me try to bring it home to you by a parallel. Suppose I went to the sheriff of this county and, putting a ten-dollar bill in his hand, said to him: 'Smith, I want to commit a burglary to-morrow,' and Smith would give me the wink. What would you think of it?"

"It would be an outrageous violation of law and decency. No reputable citizen would think of such a thing, no sheriff would tolerate——"

"Just so," I interposed. "But when you tell me that I as a Catholic can and do go to a priest and buy a permission to commit a sin to-morrow, you are accusing me of something of even a more heinous character than my hypothetical case of purchasing immunity to commit a crime from the sheriff. Do you honestly believe that I would be guilty of either?"

Patterson began to look somewhat uneasy.

"Of course I didn't mean anything personal."

"So you thought, but whether you thought so or not, you were personal. I am a Catholic, and I believe in indulgences. In fact, I am avid of indulgences and try to gain as many as I can. But I will ignore the personal element. Frankly you know nothing about indulgences, and your idea of them is a monstrous travesty of the true doctrine. I am not in the least surprised at your notion of them. You were brought up on it, and I fully realize that it is an ingrained prejudice which is hard to scrape out of the bone."

Patterson was nonplussed. Instead of an argument

he had met with a flat accusation, which put *him* on the defensive—in something of a quandary—for which, at least at the moment, he was not prepared. He was even less prepared for what I was about to say. I was rushing his position with a vengeance. It was the only way with a man of his type.

"Do you know that the State of New York grants indulgences?"

He looked at me in blank amazement. "You are a lawyer," I went on. "You have no doubt been in court when a judge has sentenced a prisoner?" He had often, he said. "Well, you have no doubt heard a judge say as he pronounced sentence on the culprit: 'I could give you five years, the extreme limit the law allows, but I will give you only three.' Or you have heard a judge say to the prisoner: 'I could send you to the Island for thirty days, but I will put you on parole.' What has the judge done but remit in part or in whole the penalty fitting the prisoner's crime? By what authority has the judge mitigated the punishment due the criminal? By the authority of the State of New York. Now, that is what the Catholic Church does when she grants an indulgence. She simply remits in part or whole the penalty due to a man's sin, the payment of the debt incurred by a man's sin in satisfaction of Divine Justice. By what authority does the Catholic Church do this? By the authority conferred upon her by Almighty God. I wouldn't believe in indulgences for a moment if I did not believe that God Almighty had the power to do this and if He had not conferred that power upon His Church. Christ who was God instituted that Church, and He explicitly and solemnly conferred the power upon her to bind and loose. 'All power is given to me in heaven and on

earth.' 'As I am sent, I send you.' 'Whatsoever you shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven.' 'He that heareth you heareth me, and he that despiseth you, despiseth me. And he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me.' Again, 'If he will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and the publican.' Read your Bible and see if these are not Christ's exact words.

"To pay the judge of the civic tribunal to remit a penalty in whole or in part would be a monstrous civic and social offense, a corruption and a debauchery of justice. Would it not be more monstrous to seek to corrupt and debauch the tribunal of conscience, the sacred tribunal of binding and loosening which Christ Himself established? And do you imagine that the Catholic Church, which holds herself the custodian of that tremendous and sacrosanct power, would approve or condone the purchase of a permission to commit sin? You must admit that the Catholic Church is not such a fool as to stultify herself and destroy the efficacy of Christ's grant of binding and loosening by corruptly selling it.

"And here let me say something that is no doubt in your mind, that there have been abuses of indulgences throughout the centuries. There have been such abuses from the beginning, for there have been from the beginning weak, ignorant and corrupt men. But if you will take the trouble to read the history of indulgences, you will find that the Church has been constantly legislating against and suppressing such abuses. I recommend to you the article on indulgences in the Encyclopedia of which I happen to be one of the editors. It will be a good beginning. At least give yourself a chance to straighten out the crooked notion of

indulgences that you gave me and you will perhaps learn that Romanism was not smashed on the doctrine of Indulgences."

This was my parting shot as our train drew into the terminal of the Grand Central. Patterson lost himself in the crowd as we climbed the ramp from the lower level. I said to myself as he disappeared, "What a terrible Catholic he would make if he ever became one. He would want to go to Rome to tell the Pope how to run the Church." There have been Catholics of that kind.

BAXTER AND SPIRITUAL FACTS

Baxter was what is called a bookish man. He liked books, especially their bindings. I do not mean that he didn't care for the inside of books, for he was a reader, but he really loved to see them well dressed. When he came into the possession of a volume whose cover wasn't up to his standard sartorially, he had it rebound to suit a more fastidious taste, which ran extravagantly to tooled leather. He had a good library of the miscellaneous kind, whose well-groomed contents stared in perfect order from their shelves. Strange to say the cases were rather plain—mere shelving, in fact. The books made a handsome array, but their setting was drab. They reminded me of gorgeously dressed women in a trolley car.

Baxter liked to talk books and serious matters. His mind was packed with a good deal of information, like furniture in a van. When he learned that I was engaged in editorial work on an encyclopedia, he proceeded to unload on me, not in vanity, but in the spirit of comradeship. I was a bookman, so was he; therefore there was a common ground between us.

We met on trains occasionally and it was not long before he invited me to see his library, of which he was immensely proud. He fondled his books affectionately and discoursed on bindings. I came, I saw, *he* conquered. I mean by that that he literally bowled me over on the subject of binding—levant, morocco, tooled, edged, flexible, cloth, buckram, what not. If I

knew anything on the subject (I was by no means what you would call erudite) I might as well have been a perfect ignoramus, for when a man rides his hobby he takes the bit in his mouth and there is no stopping him.

Baxter had his innings that night. I went home in a chastened mood. I had been through a barrage which metaphorically blew me to bits. That night I had a nightmare. Books in monstrous bindings chased me, surrounded me, assaulted me. Baxter in flaming red leather armor, astride a green binding with dragons writhing up the sides, pranced on my chest, threatening to pierce me through as he wielded a colossal paper-cutter. That nightmare almost prejudiced me against books thereafter. Since then I never can see a handsome set of bindings in gilded panoply, especially in tooled leather, without thinking of an army in dreadful battle array. Fortunately time cures everything, and the horror of my nightmare finally faded away until I can now face any display bindings with some equanimity.

It was well that Baxter had a hobby in the shape of bookbindings. It was a happy safety valve—hobbies generally are—for a tremendously serious mind, which took itself so ponderously that it would have brooded into melancholy if it had no outlet for the effects of too much sobriety.

You see, Baxter had no sense of humor, and a man who has no sense of humor has no sense of proportion. That was the main trouble with the Puritans. A sense of humor would have saved them from Calvin, the burning of witches, infant damnation, predestination, and that general black outlook upon life which made their virtues so stern that they looked like vices. A

merry virtue has so much levity that it lifts us up toward Heaven. A stern virtue weighs us down so heavily that we find ourselves perilously seated on the slippery declivity that slopes into Hell.

Now Baxter was temperamentally a Puritan, whose love of luxurious bindings saved him from the perdition of the sterner virtues. It stood him to some extent in lieu of a sense of humor. Talking his hobby, he was a fairly genial man. Talking anything else, his gravity was like the pull of the center of the earth.

I soon discovered that he was mentally a much perturbed man. He had long given up any outward form of creed and sat apart contemplating all, a mental pose which has become very fashionable, for there are mental fashions just as there are bodily fashions. To sit apart and contemplate them all is an easy attitude and implies a certain philosophic superiority which is unctuously gratifying to the attitudinizer. Not that Baxter had any idea that he was posing, but he thought that it was imposing.

Before the World War (I had this from him in a long conversation when the 5:30 was belated some two hours on a stormy winter's night) he had been mentally serene in his contemplative outlook upon all the creeds in an enthusiastic belief in Human Progress ("human progress" was spelled with capital letters). Science had unlocked the secret of the universe. Evolution had demonstrated the "upward development of humanity" from protoplasm (a vital speck of primitive matter) through higher and higher forms of life, reptile, bird, ape, to nature's crowning glory, man.

It was a long and laborious process through millions and millions of years. Mind had evolved at last from

matter and mind dominated matter. Mind in man had torn the veil from nature's mystery. Civilization was mind's mastery of matter. The wonderful achievement of mind over matter in the past hundred years was the prologue to the millennium, which was about to be ushered in. Perpetual peace on earth was in view at last. There would be no more wars, at least no more wars of any moment; here and there, perhaps, on the outskirts of civilization, but civilized man had become too civilized to engage in war again. Evil was ceasing to be an influence among mankind. It was recognized simply as the struggle upward from the slime, merely the temporary limitation of humanity aspiring to higher things, and was constantly being triumphantly canceled. Good was rapidly gaining a righteous ascendancy; benevolence was the predominant spirit of the world; the brotherhood of man, the accepted creed of civilization, the religion of the future, which would dispense, had in fact dispensed, with the dogmatic and outworn creeds of the past.

What Baxter was telling me that night was based partly upon an article he had read in an English periodical, entitled "England up against the Real Thing," by L. P. Jacks, a millennial pundit in those pre-war days, and still a pundit though not as cocksure as he once was. It was from millennial pundits like Jacks, in those far-off days, that Baxter had gathered his faith in human progress, and the supreme triumph of man's mind over matter, the super-civilization which science was dispensing to the world.

Then something happened. That something was the World War.

Baxter quoted from Jacks, who was writing at the end of the first year of the War. I can only recall the

gist of his words. They were to this effect: The glittering prospect of the millennium had been shattered. Civilization was being engulfed in the awful cataclysm that had suddenly overwhelmed mankind. The iridescent bubbles of their former complacent speculation burst and disappeared. They had been schematizing the religion of the future, but when face to face with this bouleversement, the religion of the future was found wanting. What was needed was a religion of the present, a religion to sustain mankind *now* in face of the monstrous catastrophe that had split the world asunder. It was all so horrible, so calamitously terrible, that he, Jacks, was beginning to think that perhaps after all there was such a thing as Original Sin, some radical defect in human nature itself. It was so maliciously evil that he was almost persuaded to believe that there was a personal Devil, some malignant being who incited the human race to self-destruction. It was a humiliating confession from a pundit of progress. It had considerably upset Baxter. It did not altogether destroy his faith in progress and the millennium, though it made a considerable dent in it. He managed to salve his bruised soul with the reflection that after all this was perhaps the final assault of the brute on man, the beast in us in a death struggle for mastery. It would be the last war. So titanic a conflict could only issue in the death of war, the war to end war. Thus he bandaged the wounds of the spirit and limped fairly comfortably around on crutches made from the flotsam and jetsam of the great maelstrom, remnants left over from the fullness of the faith that was once his.

"I assure you," said Baxter in a voice in which solemnity and melancholy harmonized profoundly,

"that it was a most trying ordeal to me. My old serenity of mind had departed and I was tossed about at times in an agony of doubt."

I believed him readily. To be rudely dumped out of the *dolce far niente* of the padded upholstery of a faith like his in human progress into the pell-mell of the smashing-up world must have been a shocking experience. L. P. Jacks must have felt the same way when he was writing that article. I could only compare the situation to one in which our train might run off the track this howling winter's night and fling us headlong, bruised and bleeding and battered, into the storm that was raging outside. It made one shudder to think of it. I sympathetically suggested the parallel to Baxter.

"Exactly, exactly," he exclaimed. "You appreciate what was my terrible predicament. It has taken me a long time to recover my mental equipoise."

"And how has that come about?" I asked.

"It has been this way," he answered. "You know since the War what a depressing note of skepticism has been sounded. After a debacle like that you know how difficult it is to readjust oneself. The securing of peace has been a tremendous conflict and the scale still trembles in the balance. Hatred, jealousies, rivalries, greeds and suspicions have never ceased. It is still an appalling outlook. I thought that our Armageddon would have been a purification of human passions."

I was wondering where Baxter's equipoise came in.

"Well?" I said expectantly.

"Just a moment," he continued. "There is something else I want to bring out. You know how wonderful have been human achievements in the past half century, how men have harnessed the forces of nature

to their purposes and stripped away the veil of its mysteries. Within your and my lifetime have all these marvels been accomplished, save two, the application of steam power to industrial processes and the telegraph. Within the space of our years man has devised the automobile, the motion picture, the telephone, the phonograph, the aeroplane, the undersea boat, the wireless, the application of electricity as an industrial power, and that latest and most marvelous of all, the radio, besides the enormous and world-shaking discoveries in chemistry and physics. Man has harnessed nature to the chariot of the mind."

I nodded, but said nothing. Baxter had not enumerated these triumphs of human science in a spirit of elation. He was leading up to something else.

"Now, the heartbreaking thing is that all these marvelous triumphs of mind over matter have turned out to be nothing but energies of destruction. The World War demonstrated this. Man unloosed against himself in pitiless slaughter and cruelty all that the cunning of his brain had wrested from nature's storehouse. He had simply constructed a lot of Frankenstein monsters to turn and rend him, and he is still making them—even more terrible monsters; new devices of destruction, especially in the line of chemistry, are being forged, I am told, so terrible that whole armies and whole populations can be wiped out by a single bomb. It looks as if man were seized with a dreadful madness. He can't help going on. It's a sort of compulsory suicidal mania. It would seem that the monster is in the saddle and there is no stopping him."

It seemed to me that Baxter was getting further and further from that mental equipoise which he assured me he had attained after the earthquake of

the World War. I was curious to see what turn he would take, for he was talking like a man who has something up his sleeve. Never interrupt a man who has something up his sleeve, or you may spoil a dramatic climax. So I waited patiently, though there were many chinks in Baxter's armor into which I might have probed with considerable effect. But it was his story.

"The situation, you see," he went on, "has been and is most depressing. We need not be surprised at the prevalent skepticism and the charge of gross materialism brought against the times. We are pleasure-mad, jazz-mad, jungle-mad, for jazz is only the African jungle creeping over into our civilization."

Baxter was declaiming. He emphasized the last sentence in a sharp crescendo. I might have believed that he thought he was getting off an epigram if I hadn't known that he was of too solemn a disposition to indulge in such a flippancy.

"All this disturbed me immensely," he went on. "I was perplexed and bewildered, astray in the dark labyrinth in which I found myself, horrified beyond measure at the ever upward creeping tide of materialism spreading around us; but I have at last hit upon the solution of the difficulties that have embarrassed me. We must bring back *spiritual values* into life. Materialism can be overcome only by *spiritual values*." Baxter emphasized spiritual values with a solemn gesture, as if he were planting a banner on the outer wall in defiance of the foes that begird the citadel of progress.

"I see," I said. "Yes, I remember having met the phrase in several magazine articles I have read recently. I confess I did not quite understand it. It appeared to me rather vague, and the context happened to

furnish no satisfactory clues. Perhaps you can define it. What are spiritual values?"

Baxter was taken aback for a moment.

"You see," I went on, "I am somewhat hazy about the meaning of spiritual values. A definition would clear the atmosphere."

"Why, spiritual values are—well—spiritual ideals," answered Baxter.

"Yes?" I queried. "But that does not penetrate the fog to clarity. I may be somewhat thick. Pardon me if I push the inquiry a bit further. What are spiritual ideals?"

"The ideal of progress, the ideal of betterment, the ideal of faith in man's ultimate triumph over his environment," declared Baxter.

"But these," I kept on probing, "were the ideals which you entertained before the World War, and upon which you based human progress. Wasn't it these very ideals that went to smash under the dreadful pounding of that titanic conflict? Human progress, you said, was predicated on man's success in harnessing nature's forces to mind, bending them to his purposes, making them servants to his needs and his luxuries. But it was these very triumphs, according to your own account, that proved his undoing. From nature's secret storehouse he has conjured up and fashioned into Frankenstein monsters the powers that are destroying him. Remember that these are not spiritual elements, but mechanical contrivances, which you yourself just said have submerged man in a sea of materialism. This urge of mechanical development you have further averred has so possessed him that he cannot stop. Human progress, it seems to me, based upon such an ideal is anything but spiritual, and

becomes the mere means of human destruction. The thing which you aver will work out his salvation is, in fact—and so you yourself have put it—the source of his perdition."

"Not at all, not at all," exclaimed Baxter, with more heat than he usually displayed. "You misunderstand me completely. My point is that we must counteract this materialistic trend, which I grant you is upon us, by spiritual values. The vision of man's future greatness——"

"Pardon me," I interrupted rather abruptly, "let us confine ourselves to man's present dilemma. Prophecy is a difficult rôle. My point is that you cannot get spiritual values, as you phrase it, out of mechanical processes. I am postulating all this on your own theory. You have said that mastery of mind over matter was progress, but mastery of matter over mind is the result, by your own confession. Mechanical contrivances do not beget spiritual values. Human progress, you say, is an ideal, but human progress yoked to matter is a materialistic ideal, not a spiritual ideal; and human progress headed for destruction, under the fatal impetus of its own obsession by material forces, is not progress, but retrogression. I think your phrase, 'spiritual values,' is a misnomer. You are using the wrong term."

"What do you mean?" asked Baxter, somewhat puzzled.

"First let me premise a bit," I answered. "I am at one with you in the belief that mankind has made wonderful progress in the industrial world in the past century, more than he has accomplished in all the centuries of his previous existence. It has been tremendous, unexampled, almost magical. Civilization in

the way of material well-being has advanced with leaps and bounds. Our modern industrialism has been an Aladdin's lamp in the hands of genius. The poet's 'better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay' has had a literal fulfillment within our lifetime. I applaud, I praise, I welcome it all. I don't want to go back to the oxcart, the stagecoach, to digging our daily bread out of a grudging soil with naked fingers. I'd rather get across the ocean in five days than in five months. I thoroughly believe in industrialism and hugely enjoy its wonderful results. Mind has mastered matter with astonishing rapidity and made living a thousandfold easier in the past fifty years.

"But you apprehend a danger. You who banked on the triumph of man's material progress as the vestibule of the millennium suddenly discover a fatal menace in it all. You were like the general who remarked after a vastly costly victory that another battle, won at such tremendous sacrifices, would mean annihilation. Victory becomes disastrous defeat. Now, I entertain no such pessimistic notion. Pessimism is a satanic outlook. It is the note of despair, and despair is the marrow of hell. I am not afraid of industrialism and its works. You were because you thought industrialism was the crowning achievement of the human mind, and when you saw the creature of man's making playing the part of Frankenstein's monster, as it seemed in the World War, you thought civilization was going to smash. That was because your faith was a pure materialism. Mind in your purview was only a subtler kind of matter, and man only a superior brute. And now let me come to your spiritual values which you believe to be the sovereign remedy for the materialism that terrifies you."

Baxter gazed at me rather startled. I had turned his own guns upon him. It was quite unexpected. I continued.

"First of all, your phrase is unfortunate. The word 'value' is an economic term and connotes exchange or barter, and spiritual things can never be exchanged nor bartered. Spiritual things are given and are enhanced in the giving away. A man who blesses loses nothing in the blessing; he is the better for having blest. You part with the material thing when you exchange or barter it. Your phrase 'spiritual values' mixes things up. It confuses matter with soul, for spiritual means spirit, and spirit means soul, or it means nothing. You cannot exchange or barter souls. Instead of spiritual value suppose we say spiritual worth. That is understandable and is inestimable. But, better still, why not say spiritual facts? Leaven the welter of materialism in which you say mankind lies groveling with spiritual facts, and you have the hope of redemption."

"Well, what are spiritual facts?" Baxter flung at me.

"God and the human soul."

Baxter smiled sourly at me. Could I be serious?

"Why, those are the very things science and human progress have thrown into the discard," he retorted.

"Quite so," I replied. "And it is just because you have emptied life of these two prime spiritual facts that the bogey of materialism so terrifies you. Materialism is life without God and the human soul. Without them you have neither real science nor progress. Without God, science becomes confusion and ends in a sterile skepticism. You have become witness to it in your own words. Without God, science devises Frank-

enstein monsters to fill you with terror and consternation. You read the current speculations in magazines and books. You tell me they are charged with pessimism. Do they get you out of the mess of your own science? You forcibly drag in a pitiful phrase, 'spiritual values,' a real *deus ex machina,* a machine god, under the delusion that it can save you. If it has any meaning at all, any possible worth, it derives its significance from the things you say have been thrown into the discard. Your very phrase is a bewildered groping after the two spiritual facts of the universe, God and the human soul.

"I have just said that I am not afraid of the materialistic hobgoblin that haunts the confused thinking of the day, and I further say that I have the utmost faith in our civilization. Let me tell you why: because our civilization has sprung from and is rooted in those two supreme spiritual facts, God and the human soul. For the same reason I welcome and acclaim the marvelous achievements of modern industrialism. They are the products of the civilization resting on those spiritual foundations. Our civilization is Christian civilization, the civilization that has sprung from and rests upon Christ's revelation, whose fundamental spiritual facts are the supreme reality of God and the supreme worth of the human soul. It was He who declared two thousand years ago: 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God and all these things shall be added unto you.'

"Who are the peoples of the earth who have wrought all the marvels you boast as man's crowning achievement? The peoples of Christendom. Outside of the circle of Christendom the peoples of the earth have stood stagnant, save in those instances where the

progress made has been pure imitation, as in Japan. Modern civilization has been built upon these two great spiritual facts; in a broad sense, the seeking of the Kingdom of God. I have faith in modern civilization because it is not modern, and is a structure which has been building for the past two thousand years, surely, solidly and substantially.

"Industrialism is, in truth, the fruit of that long toil through the centuries, and industrialism can only overwhelm us in materialism when men cut it away from the roots which have nourished it. This is just what you would do when you would lay the axe to the spiritual facts whence it has drawn its life. You would deny the worth of the human soul and catalogue man with the beasts of the field, the most cunning of all beasts, but still essentially a mere animal. Deny the human soul and its immortal worth in an eternal destiny and you have leveled man to the dirt. Soulless man is only a handful of dust, a mixture of chemical elements in ephemeral balance for a moment of time, and then a handful of dust again. If man be only this you may well be frightened at the specter of materialism rising like a poisonous miasma from the fetid regions of industrialism, where the cunningest of all beasts has built not a palace of life but a charnel house of death.

"Now, I believe that man is more than brute. I believe that he is lord of creation and that dominion over the earth has been given to him; that he is more than the machine of his own devising, and master of the works of his hand. He is this because he possesses a soul with an immortal destiny, made in the image of his Creator. Your doctrine of a soulless man is a horrible nightmare, a satanic phantasmagoria, the root

of pessimism and perdition. I know that you do not mean this, but this is the conclusion to which your premises lead. Your feeble phrase, 'spiritual values,' is a futile protest against your own obsession. What is needed is not spiritual values but spiritual facts. Our civilization rests upon these and can be saved only by these."

Baxter tried several times to interrupt me during this bit of discourse, but I refused to be diverted. I usurped the right of way, for I was determined that he should hear something I felt certain he had never heard before.

"I know," I concluded, "that you don't agree with me and are far from accepting all that I have said, but it is at least worth thinking over. It can't hurt you to give it a chance for mental digestion."

Our belated train had drawn into the station by this time. Baxter went his way and I mine. I got home to a cold dinner, but I consoled myself with the thought that the delay was perhaps worth the while. Going to bed that night I felt a little compunction at my unceremonious over-riding of Baxter. His "good-night" as we parted was somewhat resentful, but he wouldn't have listened if I hadn't forced him, and I believe he really needed a little mental dressing down —and then there was so much more I might have said if I had had time.

PATTERSON AND INFALLIBILITY

Whom should I meet the next day on the 8:30 but Patterson. Here was nemesis overtaking me for my rough-rider conduct of the night before toward Baxter. Patterson's smile was positively sardonic—so it seemed to me—as he sat down alongside of me.

"Hello, Dr. Infallible," was his matutinal salutation.

"Look here, Patterson," I said, "you are spoiling for argument. Well, you're not going to get one. I positively decline to be drawn into a discussion this morning. I had one last night with Baxter, and I didn't leave him in a placid frame of mind, for I was forced to some rather emphatic elucidation which I know riled him. Now, I don't like to rile people, and I don't like to be riled myself, especially this early in the morning. I'd rather talk about the weather to you. There's no argument there."

"Fine day," said Patterson sarcastically. It was raining cats and dogs outside. I shrugged my shoulders.

"I suppose if the Pope said so you'd believe it. He's infallible, you know," went on Patterson in an ironically belligerent tone.

"As you please," I answered, refusing to rise to the obvious bait.

"It's wretched weather," declared Patterson.

"You're infallible," I answered.

"Well, there's one point we can agree upon at any rate," he grinned back. "But, honestly, I am not trying to badger you, nor provoke you into an argument."

"When a man," I said, "comes up to me with a chip on his shoulder and blood in his eye, all the indications are that he is looking for a fight. You can keep your chip on your shoulder this morning. I decline the challenge for your own sake."

"For my sake! Well, I like that!" exclaimed Patterson. "What in thunder do you mean?"

"Well, I mean that when I argue I've got to pound you. You are an argumentative 'cuss' and fight back. Our arguments soon degenerate into a rough and tumble, and when you get worsted—excuse me, but you do get worsted—you don't like it. You resent it and all the good I might do you is lost in a feeling of soreness. I have told you before that I will not argue with you."

Patterson was just relighting his pipe which had gone out several times. He paused until he had got a good pull on the rekindled tobacco.

"Umph!" he ejaculated, "but you are brutally frank. I might well retort and tell you that you are simply a 'bruiser,' a regular 'slugger,' and never really give a fellow a show."

I put that in my pipe and smoked it. It was a little jolt to my humility, or rather my lack of it—a reflection which I did not, however, confide to Patterson. I was thinking of Baxter and the night before.

"But I am going," said Patterson, looking squarely at me, "to swallow your imputation on my amiability, which I confess is a bit dour. Howbeit, I want to say that I am really asking you for a bit of information. I will come to you as to the feet of Gamaliel."

This was a new experience with Patterson. It was the first time I ever heard him consent to ask and not argue. I was surprised and interested.

"All right," I answered, "If that be your meek mood, go ahead. What is it?"

"Well, it's this way," said Patterson. "You see, what you told me the other day about indulgences set me to thinking a bit. I said to myself, if I had a wrong notion about indulgences, maybe I have wrong notions about other things in Romanism. I heard a sermon the other day in our church in which our minister said that your Romanist doctrine of Infallibility was a great mainstay among Romanists against infidelity in these times, and that if we had a bit of infallibility in our own church, it would help mightily against the Modernists, as they are called, who are undermining the Christian faith of our people. Now Infallibility seems to me a queer sort of belief, and maybe I haven't the right sort of notions about it, so I thought I'd ask you."

If Patterson had stood in the middle of the aisle on his head and kicked his long legs in the air, I couldn't have been more surprised. Was this really Patterson, the doughty Scot, who was wont to shrill the bagpipes to the pibroch of battle, now fluting the reeds of Pan in this mellowed strain? He saw the look of amazement on my face.

"I mean it, I really want to know," he said. *Mirabile dictu!* But this was a different Patterson from the one I had ever known before.

There was no gainsaying his request.

"All right, Patterson, I'll try to elucidate a bit. I know that you are an old-fashioned Presbyterian, and a staunch one, I believe. You have no use for the Modernists, as they are called, I understand."

"I haven't. I think they are doing the Devil's work," he said grimly.

"I suppose you spell the name with a capital 'D'."

"I do," he answered. "The very same Satan who tempted Christ."

I thought what a grand mix-up he and Baxter would make together. Dour Calvinist in mortal combat against Agnostic Humanitarian.

"You remember, Patterson, I asked you the other day for your definition of an indulgence. Well, I am not going to ask you for your definition of Infallibility, for I am certain that it would be just as wide of the mark, nor am I going to define Infallibility at the start. The better way in this matter is to build up to its meaning from certain premises from which it is logically derived. A little docility on your part will help."

Patterson nodded acquiescently.

"I take it that you believe that Christ was God and taught the truth and that His mission on earth was to teach men such truths as He deemed necessary for salvation. I am not forgetting that Christ also came to redeem man by His sufferings and death on the Cross, whereby He gave infinite satisfaction for all man's transgressions against Divine Justice. You, I know, believe this just as I do, but this is not the matter we are just now considering, and has no bearing on the question of Infallibility. I say this so as not to confuse the issue. The point I am making now is that Christ taught truth. He taught truth because He knew the truth. He was omniscient and knew therefore the absolute truth of all He taught.

"My next point is that, being God, He couldn't teach anything but the truth. God is infinite truth and infinite perfection, therefore in Him can be no shadow of falsehood or error. Both are absolutely repugnant to

the Divine Nature. Pure light can have no admixture of darkness, pure truth no admixture of error. He taught as God, who is at the same time man, and solemnly declared so. 'I and the Father are one.' 'All power is given to me in heaven and on earth.' 'As I am sent, so I send you.' There are innumerable texts in the Scriptures, His own sayings, and those of His apostles, attesting to His divinity. The Gospel of St. John was written especially to witness to His divinity. 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.' He was not only an inerrant human teacher, but the Divine Teacher in whose teaching there could be no possible error. He was the Divine Revealer of Divine Truth in the flesh. When the High Priest adjured Him if He were the Son of God, His reply was, 'Thou hast said it.' His own words before Pilate were, 'I am the way, the truth and the life.' Christ, therefore, as teaching His apostles was exempt from any liability to error. In other words His teaching was absolutely inerrant. He inerrantly revealed truth and inerrantly taught truth. This, I suppose, you admit."

"I do," answered Patterson. "I am a good Christian. I am not gainsaying it."

"Very good, then," I went on. "All I am saying is that the Founder of Christianity was infallible and His teaching infallible.

"Now, second step. The apostles of Christ received an infallible message in a body of doctrine revealed to them by Christ. There could be no possible error in it. They were commissioned to go out into the world to teach that same message. This also I think you will admit."

Patterson nodded his acquiescence.

"You remember Christ's words; they were imperatively authoritative. 'All power is given to me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and behold I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world.' Mark records the same commission: 'Go ye into the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be condemned.' In other words, Christ was instituting a body of teachers and giving that body the plenitude of His own divine authority to teach the entire world, and commanding every creature to accept that teaching. As omniscient God, he fully understood and realized His own words, and His apostles to whom they were addressed must have understood and realized what He intended to convey. Now Christ was to die, rise from the dead, and ascend into Heaven, leaving that teaching body behind Him. Here was the promise of infallible guidance to the immediate group who received that commission. That apostolic group were to pass away in time, leaving behind them successors to carry on that teaching mission. If that infallible guidance was to fail the successors of this first group, then the generation following the apostles would not know whether they were receiving the true teaching of Christ or not.

"Remember that Christ's teaching, as His own words show, was not only for the generation in which He lived, but for all generations to come. All nations, every creature in all ages to come was to be taught to observe all things whatsoever He commanded His

immediate followers to teach. How are you and I in this generation, two thousand years after Christ's coming, to know what was the doctrine He taught unless that teaching body which He then established survives intact in the successors of the apostles, and teaches us with the same infallible assurance with which the apostles themselves taught in the first days of the Church? As that first body was, on the promise of Christ, exempt from all liability of error in teaching their generation, so must that same body perpetuated in their successors be exempt from all liability of error in teaching the present generation. Otherwise there has been a failure in Christ's mission, and His express command to teach all peoples was futile, and His promise to be with those He had sent to the consummation of the world, meaningless. In other words, Christ stultified Himself, was not what He said He was, and had neither the divine authority to teach nor the power to preserve that teaching intact and pure for the generations to come.

"What the Catholic Church means by Infallibility, then, is the exemption from the liability to error on the part of that teaching body He Himself instituted in teaching those doctrines which He came on earth to reveal for man's salvation. It is really a very simple doctrine when you analyze its meaning. Put it in this way: Christ was God; Christ taught infallibly; He established a Church to teach His doctrines through all generations; He intended His teaching to be taught as He taught it, exempt from liability to error; He promised His Church His infallible guidance, so as to make sure that His teaching would be conveyed to future generations. He is God; He has the knowledge and the power to guide His Church inerrantly to the

end of the world. He has done so and will always do so to the end of time."

Patterson lighted and relighted his pipe many times during my crude and necessarily meager exposition of Infallibility.

"You are a canny logician," he said, looking at me a little askance, as if I had pulled off some trick in prestidigitation. The logic of the proposition had gripped him, but I could see that he was fighting against it. The habit of suspicion so indigenous to the non-Catholic mind when there is any question concerning Romanism stood sturdily against assent.

"Be that as it may," I answered, "logic is logic, and truth truth, and neither you nor I can make it otherwise. Anything wrong in what I have said?"

"I can't see that there is, but I will have to think it over," he answered.

"Well, before you think it over, there are one or two things I would like to put before you. First of all, I want to say what Infallibility is not. It is not revelation, and it is not inspiration. Inspiration signifies a positive special divine influence and assistance, by reason of which the human agent is not merely preserved from liability to error, but it so guided or controlled that what he says or writes is truly the word of God; that God Himself is the principal author of the inspired utterance. Christ revealed His doctrine, and that closed the chapter. He did not give the Church power to reveal other truths. He simply promised that what He had revealed should be taught inerrantly to all mankind by His Church.

"Revelation means the making known by God, supernaturally, of some truth hitherto unknown, or at least not vouched for by divine authority; whereas

Infallibility is simply the interpretation and safeguard of truth already revealed. What Christ revealed the Church interprets and effectually safeguards. The Church reveals no new truths, declares no new truths. She merely defines the old truths and declares what are the truths revealed by Christ and the implications of those truths given once for all in the deposit of revelation. She adds nothing to, and takes nothing from, these truths. Infallibility is only hers by Christ's own promise. The Church lays no claim to be the organ of revelation or of inspiration. It is just as well to bear this in mind when you start in to think over what I have said to you about Infallibility."

"You mean that your Church doesn't make up any new doctrines from time to time?" Patterson was evidently surprised.

"Just that," I answered.

"But I thought you Romanists were all the time making up fresh dogmas. This very dogma of Infallibility about the Pope was, I understand, made a little over fifty years ago."

"The Pope's Infallibility was defined in the Vatican Council in 1870, but to define an old truth is not to make a new one. To declare an unknown and new truth would be a revelation, and as I have just pointed out to you, the Catholic Church distinctly makes no such claim. To put the old truth in precise and unmistakable terms, to formulate and define it and to declare it to be of the faith held by the Church, and to announce it as such, is to give a dogmatic decision. This the Church has done from time to time when a point of faith or morals may either have been called in question, owing to an heretical aberration on the part of some, or when to some it seemed either not clear or a matter of

honest dispute. Then the supreme magisterium of the Church declares definitively whether it is or is not of faith, a doctrine revealed by Christ, or a corollary flowing from that revelation. And now, since you have referred to Papal Infallibility, let me say something about that, as I know it is usually utterly misunderstood by non-Catholics."

"That's just what I was going to ask you," said Patterson. "That's a doctrine that fairly knocks me out. It seems to me to make a sort of God out of a man. How can a mere man never be wrong or do wrong?"

"I am not surprised at your bizarre notion, Patterson. It is the absurd idea that those who know nothing about the meaning of Papal Infallibility usually entertain. You are right in the supposition which your question implies, that a mere man can never do wrong and never be wrong. You have confused two very different things, Infallibility and Impeccability. Impeccability means exemption from liability of sin. Christ alone was both infallible and impeccable. The Pope is just as peccable as you or I. He goes to confession, and oftener for that matter than I do. He strikes his breast just as any other Catholic, *mea culpa, mea maxima culpa,* and tells his sins and his faults to his confessor, makes his act of contrition, and his firm purpose of amendment like any other penitent. So just get out of your head any notion that the Pope is exempt from liability to sin, and get in your mind that Impeccability is not Infallibility.

"And now let me get clear another distinction, the lack of which leads to other absurd notions about the Pope's Infallibility. First of all, the Pope, like any other man, can make a mistake in adding up a column of figures, and if he hasn't any better sense of figures

than I have, he will be pretty sure to get a wrong total to any column of from ten to twenty figures he may have occasion to compute. He may make an error in judgment about anything you please. He may make an error in diplomacy, in political matters, in the administration of ecclesiastical affairs, or even in doctrinal matters—as a *private person.*

"There is only one instance when he is infallible, that is, exempt from liability to error; namely, when he declares officially as head of the Church, as pastor and teacher of all Christians, what is of faith and of morals, to be held as such by all the Faithful. That in substance is the Vatican Council's definition of Papal Infallibility. This is predicated upon Christ's promise that His Church would be divinely and therefore inerrantly guided in teaching whatsoever He Himself had taught and commanded to be taught through all generations to come, and is also predicated upon Christ's commission to Peter, whose successor is every Pope who has validly succeeded Peter as shepherd of the flock. You remember, of course, since you are a reader of the Bible"—Patterson glanced at me a little queerly as I took for granted his familiarity with the Bible—"how emphatically Christ imposed the duty and office of leading and confirming His brethren in the Faith upon Peter specifically. In the twenty-first chapter of St. John's Gospel, three times Christ solemnly elicited from Peter the latter's adjuration of love for Him, and after each of two affirmations on Peter's part commanded him to feed His lambs, and after the third, laid upon him the injunction to feed His sheep. It was Peter's office to feed both lambs and sheep, the complete and supreme pastoral charge of the whole of Christ's flock.

"You will also recall the passage from the twenty-second chapter of St. Luke, where Christ solemnly declares to Peter, whose name was Simon: 'Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he might sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not: and thou being once converted confirm thy brethren.' And again you will recall that stupendous declaration in the sixteenth chapter of St. Matthew, when Christ addresses Simon as Peter (the rock): 'Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.' Thrice, then, is the headship, the supreme pastorate given to Peter and, as chief of the apostles, to all of his successors in that primacy; for Peter was to die, and the need of a chief pastor, who was to feed both lambs and sheep, to confirm his brethren in the faith, to unite, guide and teach, was to be as great in the generations to come as in the generation of Peter himself. Peter was the first vicar of Christ on earth, and every succeeding vicar up to our own day possesses all the plenitude of Peter's office. Either that, or you will be forced to admit that the flock is without a head, that Christ's solemn promises are without avail, and His Church a failure."

By this time the train was in the station and the passengers were filing out. Some of them turned as they passed the seat where Patterson and I were engaged in our rather emphatic conversation and gazed at us, wondering no doubt at what manner of subject it could be that was so absorbingly engrossing two early morning commuters. Among them was Baxter. He nodded at me, rather coldly, I thought. He then glanced at Patterson. The flicker of a derisive smile played around Baxter's lips as he passed on. I knew

what was in his mind. He was saying to himself, "There's that dogmatic thug laying out Patterson."

Like a policeman's, a commuter's life is not a happy one. Here, in spite of my pacific intentions, I was getting the reputation of being an intellectual bruiser, a sort of heavyweight in the religious arena. I mentioned the impression to Patterson. He chuckled grimly.

"What!" I exclaimed. "Do you think that?"

"No, not exactly," he answered. "What I was really thinking was what an infernal ass that agnostic prig, Baxter, is. If I had my way with that sort of cattle," Patterson's face hardened, "I'd burn him at the stake."

I thought of Calvin and Servetus at Geneva several hundred years ago.

WILKINS AND THE POPE

I met Wilkins on the 12:07 one afternoon. Instead of taking a vacation, I was taking two afternoons off in the week to play golf. It was on one of these afternoons I met Wilkins. He was bound on the same errand.

"Hello, there," he said, as he slid into the vacant seat next to me. "How do you get off so early in the day? Has the Pope given you a holiday?"

He was, of course, jesting, but back of the jest I knew there was a notion in his mind, a notion widespread among a certain class of people that the Pope directs and controls all the actions of Catholics.

Wilkins came from somewhere in New England where the odor of the bilge of the Mayflower still lingers, and where the Puritan tradition that a "Papist" is a son of Belial, with horns and tail, still haunts the meeting-house and flavors the Sunday sermons. Though infant damnation, fire and brimstone and other sundry and delectable articles of the old Puritan creed have been jettisoned from the floundering ark of the Pilgrim fathers amid the rough seas of Modernism, the belief that Catholics are strange animals and Rome is the Scarlet Woman still persists in the Freudian complex of the New England mind—and Wilkins had the New England mind, for he had exposed it to me on several occasions where the Knickerbocker veneer was a bit thin. So when he flung his little jest at me

about the Pope's holiday, I jumped at the opportunity of practicing a little humorous psychoanalysis upon his Calvinistic complex.

"Yes," I answered, "we had a radio from the Vatican this morning ordering us to lay off work for the rest of the day." I didn't crack a smile. Wilkins looked at me suspiciously.

"You see," I went on gravely, "the radio puts us in very close touch with the Pope. The Vatican has perhaps the most powerful broadcasting apparatus in the world, built especially by the Jesuits for the Pope, and the Jesuits have resurrected a code, a secret cipher of the Dark Ages, which defies unraveling by any modern method. The Vatican authorities and the Jesuits alone hold the key. There is a Jesuit on our staff. All messages are decoded by him for us."

The word Jesuit was enough for Wilkins. I saw the New England complex peering out of his eyes, mingled with a faint doubt that I was perhaps spoofing him.

"The radio is a marvelous invention," I continued soberly. "I know of nothing that has so helped the Pope in controlling the hundreds of millions of Catholics throughout the world. Just think of it. It's practically instantaneous. Our radio message this morning from the Pope was in our hands in less than three minutes after it was broadcast, and here I am, a half-hour afterward, on my way for a good old game of golf. Perhaps you didn't know that the radio is a Jesuit invention, devised especially for the use of the Pope. That's a dark secret known only to Catholics. For several years the radio was known to, and used only by, the Vatican authorities and the Jesuits, but there was a leak somewhere—you know how things like that will

leak out—perhaps someone was bribed—and those nosey scientists caught on, and now the radio is a commonplace in our lives."

By this time my risibles were no longer under control, especially when I observed Wilkins' countenance tensely set in the perplexed and frightened credulity of his New England complex. I could contain myself no longer, and burst into laughter, in which, after a moment's hesitation, Wilkins joined, for his complex was still half reluctant to slink back into the murky caverns of the subconscious, where, according to the Freudian hokum, the monster slumbers in darkness like the dragon Fafnir guarding the hoard in Niebelung legend.

"It is to laugh, as the French say," I declared. Wilkins admitted it, though I could see that he was still a bit dubious.

"Now, honestly, Wilkins, you were quite prepared to swallow my nonsense whole, weren't you, if I had kept it up with becoming gravity?"

"No, not altogether," he answered. "That tale about the Jesuits inventing the radio was a bit far-fetched."

"I see," I remarked. "But that's the part that should have the most likelihood for your credulity. Wouldn't it be patly Jesuitical to invent the radio, keep it a dark secret, a sort of black magic, you know, and put this canny power into the hands of the Pope for sinister purposes?"

"Are you a Jesuit?" asked Wilkins suddenly and irrelevantly. He was in earnest.

"No, I am not," I answered, "but what has that to do with the case?"

"Oh, nothing especially. I just thought I would ask you. I don't know much about them. I once read *The*

Wandering Jew, and the Jesuits are painted pretty black there."

"They are, but the Devil, it is said, is not as black as he is sometimes painted," I replied. "If you would care to know something more about the Jesuits, I could suggest a book or two which might tone down the lurid picture that Eugene Sue has given. They are not such terrible fellows after all, and have played a considerable rôle in human history for the past four hundred years. Their story is really most interesting reading, and a veritable romance. I have a book in my library, which I will be glad to lend you if you want to know who and what the Jesuits really are."

Wilkins said he would be glad to read it, but I could see that his assent to my suggestion was purely perfunctory, a mere acquiescence of bare politeness, so I didn't urge it. Besides, he was uneasy. My joke in answer to his jest had ruffled him a bit, and he was fighting shy of the subject, so I determined to push it.

"Let us return to our mutton," I said.

"What do you mean?" he queried.

"Why, simply this," I answered. "There was an implication in your bit of levity, when you asked me if the Pope had given me a holiday, to the effect that the Pope directs and controls all the actions of Catholics. Frankly, don't you entertain such notions?"

"Well, isn't it true" he parried. "Don't you have to believe what the Pope says, and don't you have to do what he tells you?"

"For instance?" I asked.

"Don't you vote at elections as your priests dictate? And of course they get their orders from Rome."

It was a crude way of putting it, but it did voice the belief of a great many non-Catholics in this country.

Wilkins was an ordinary type of the plain business man with a modicum of education, whose mental pabulum came chiefly from newspapers and popular magazines. His voice was the voice of a vulgar ignorance, but his ignorance of things Catholic was after all no denser than what I have heard from the lips of citizens who prided themselves on their culture and wide reading. I have heard the same thing, not couched so bluntly perhaps, from men with university training, a presumable acquaintance with history, and intelligence enough in the usual affairs of life, but who believed, as Wilkins expressed it, that Catholics took their orders from Rome in everything, even to the kind of breakfast food they are to eat, or the color of their neckties. It is a habit of mind that has come down from a traditional prejudice which for centuries has been fed on misinformation, until it encrusts the mind under accumulated layers of nonsense. Between the uneducated ignorant, and the ignorantly educated, when it comes to a question of what is Catholic belief, there is not as much difference, in effect, as between the pot and the kettle; they are both sooted in the same way.

"As I am a Catholic, Wilkins," I answered, "presumably I ought to know something about what you have just asserted. Now I have been a Catholic all my life, and have been in very close contact in many ways with Catholic priests, and I have never heard a Catholic priest so much as even suggest how I was to vote, and have never heard of any priest even broaching, much less dictating, to any other Catholic how he was to vote, nor have I ever heard of any orders from Rome in regard to political questions."

Wilkins looked incredulity.

"Look here, Wilkins, I see that you doubt me. Either

I am deliberately lying, or I don't know. I take it that you don't believe I am lying. Well, if I don't know, who am a Catholic, and rather intimately acquainted with Catholic affairs, how do you know? Where and how did you get your information?"

I kept plying him with more specific questions. Had he ever been in a Catholic church? Once at the funeral of a friend. Had he ever heard a priest trying to influence a Catholic to vote? Had a Catholic ever told him that a priest had ever tried to dictate how he should vote? Had he ever read a Catholic book, or paper, or magazine, or document of any kind in which Catholics were ordered to vote as Rome or the Catholic clergy commanded? To all of which he admitted that he never had.

"Well, then, where did you get the idea that Catholics were simply voting puppets in the hands of the priests?"

He didn't really know. He just had the idea, had always had it; took it as a matter of course. He had always heard it, just where he couldn't exactly say, but it was a common belief among non-Catholics. Perhaps he had heard it in some sermon in the days when he used to go to church, or perhaps he had seen it in a newspaper, or book, or magazine. It was all very vague, except that he had the idea and really believed it to be true.

"I'll tell you, Wilkins, where you got it, if you would really like to know."

He looked at me in surprise, as much as to say, "If I don't know where I got it, how do you?"

"You got it," I went on, "from a complex which has been accumulating in a very tangled mesh for a long time back. It began in the time of Henry VIII, King

STUDIO ADDICTUS
Province of Holy Cross

of England. You know, of course, who Henry VIII was?"

He didn't know much about Henry, except that he had a lot of wives whose heads he had successively chopped off when he wanted a new one. What knowledge he had of Henry was fairly accurate, so I let it go at that.

"Well, the complex, whence comes your idea of the Catholic Church, derives originally from Henry's uxorious conduct in the matter of wives. The first time Henry lusted for a new wife he found himself legally and canonically bound to his first wife. The legal bond he could sever without much trouble. He was king and a despot.

"Now, Henry was a Catholic, and he found that the canonical bond held firm, so he sent his ambassadors to Rome to get the Pope to consent to set aside his marriage with Catherine of Aragon on the grounds that it was invalid, because Catherine had been the wife of his dead brother, and the union troubled the King's delicate conscience. You see, the King's conscience began to plague him as soon as he laid eyes on Anne Boleyn, the lady whom he wanted to put in place of Queen Catherine, but the Pope did not see with Henry's eyes and refused to pronounce Catherine's marriage void. She was his lawful and valid wife, and no power save death could sever that bond.

"So Henry swore his favorite oath, that he would be his own Pope, and do as he pleased about wives. He did. He put Catherine aside, and finally counted six wives on the rôle of his lust, some of whom he sent to the block, and some simply laid on the shelf at his royal pleasure. Now that Henry was pope of England as well as king, he turned his eyes to the monasteries

and their broad lands. He despoiled them in short order, and enriched the royal coffers, as well as his favorites, who carried out his commands.

"Queen Elizabeth, the daughter of Anne Boleyn, the lady whose eyes had so troubled the King's conscience, completed the breach with the Catholic Church. The English, who were a Catholic people, were made Protestant by royal decree and by force, and from that time a steady propaganda of execration and calumny against the Catholic Church was carried on which has swelled into an unsavory tradition of contempt and hatred for all things Catholic. It has been a constant and muddy stream of misrepresentation through the centuries, and is only now beginning to be clarified a bit by the researches of historians, who are looking into the records with steady eyes free from the iniquitous tradition which has eaten like a cancer into English religious life, a tradition which this country has inherited and imbibed with the language, the literature, and the history that has been transmitted to us from England."

All this I pounded into Wilkins' bewildered ear, not without some interruptions on his part, and explanations on mine, which I do not record here for the sake of brevity.

"This tradition is the root of your complex, Wilkins," I went on, "mixed up with a number of bogies about the Spanish Armada, the Inquisition, the Jesuits, Guy Fawkes, St. Bartholomew's Massacre, and the wickedness of Papists in general. It is all of a piece; what a great French writer of the last century, De Maistre, called a conspiracy against truth for three hundred years, and what the editors of the *Cambridge History,* in our own day, call the same. This is the thing you absorbed from your New England environ-

ment. It's soaked into you. It is your Protestant complex.

"You are afraid of the Catholic Church, for these anti-Catholic hobgoblins still haunt the secret chambers of your soul and poke up their hideous heads every time you run up against anything Catholic. It is this that is at the bottom of your notion that Catholics are completely under the thumb of the Pope. It is this that evokes your idea that the Pope is a sinister old man like a great spider spinning his poisonous web from the Vatican to enmesh the whole world. It is this that is at the bottom of Ku-Kluxism, that the Pope is plotting with the connivance of Catholics here to seize the American Government and set himself up in the White House as Lord of America."

Wilkins vehemently repudiated on his part any such ridiculous notion as that. He was not a Ku-Kluxer himself. Ku-Kluxism was un-American, founded on bigotry and ignorance. I smiled to myself. Here was a man whose whole mental make-up concerning the Catholic Church was at bottom as bigoted and ignorant as that of the most fanatical Ku-Kluxer. Logically, he should have fallen in with Ku-Kluxism as readily as a key fits a lock made for it, but he spewed Ku-Kluxism out of his mouth because he thought it un-American. His contradiction was sound, though his logic was utterly inconsistent. Contradictions sometimes save men from their follies, and logic is often far from being a rule of life. Wilkins' Americanism saved him from the tragedy of his own confused mental processes.

"I am glad to see that you are such a good American," I said to him.

"Of course I am," he answered. "Why shouldn't I be?"

"Happily you are," I replied, "but at the expense of consistency. Just a moment"—he was about to interrupt me—"let me explain. You believe that I, as a Catholic, owe political and civil allegiance to the Pope. Only a moment ago you said that I had to vote as the Pope dictated. If that were true you ought to be a Ku-Kluxer, for that is the declared basis of Ku-Kluxism, yet you repudiate the movement. That's where you are inconsistent. Your inconsistence is right, your belief altogether wrong, for I owe neither political nor civil allegiance to the Pope. Let us say—for civil and political allegiance—temporal allegiance, as covering both. The only temporal allegiance I owe is to my country. That is the teaching of the Catholic Church.

"I suppose you have heard the saying, 'Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's.' I don't know how much you are acquainted with the Bible, but these words were a solemn declaration of Christ on a momentous occasion. The Pharisees were trying to trap Him into a treasonable utterance. The Jews were at the time subject to the Roman emperor. Their question to Him was: Was it lawful to pay tribute to Caesar? It was in response to this question that Christ gave His memorable answer.

"The Catholic attitude to the civil power (Caesar) is the answer that Christ gave to the Jews. Whatever is due to the civil authority should be rendered to it. It is Catholic teaching that the civil power is of God because men are social beings and are ordained to live in society, and God Himself is the author of society. Pope Leo XIII in one of his encyclicals (*Immortale Dei*) says: 'As no society can hold together unless someone is over all directing all to strive earnestly for

the common good, every civilized community must have a ruling authority, and this authority, no less than society itself, has its source in nature, and has God for its author. Hence it follows that all public power must proceed from God.' The Catholic bishops of the United States in solemn council as far back as 1866 issued a pastoral letter to all the Catholics of this country, in which they declared: 'For the children of the Church obedience to the civil power is not a submission to force which may not be resisted; nor merely the compliance with a condition of peace and security; but a religious duty founded on obedience to God, by whose authority the civil magistrate exercises his power.'

"So you see that the Catholic Church lays it upon the conscience of every Catholic to obey the civil power, to render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's. Catholics are bound not only to obey civil rulers, but they owe allegiance to the State in all things that the State may lawfully demand of them. When their country calls upon them to defend it against any enemy, internal or external, Catholics are bound in conscience to respond and give their lives in defense of the State. As a Catholic, I owe no temporal allegiance to the Pope; spiritual allegiance, yes; for he is the head of the Church, its spiritual ruler.

"All the balderdash you hear about the Pope plotting to seize this government is a silly figment of sheer ignorance. What I am saying may sound strange to you because you were brought up on the absurd notion that the Catholic Church is ready to gobble up this country, and you have never taken the trouble to find out the facts for yourself. I am not blaming you, as I might very justly, for you have no right to entertain

a calumny against your neighbor. I am simply pointing out to you the state of your own mind. I am not even exhorting you to impose upon yourself the duty of trying to enlighten your ignorance. All I want is to disabuse your mind of a very foolish prejudice that has no foundation. I know that you don't half believe me, for you can't rid yourself of an ingrained habit of suspicion in regard to the Catholic Church on such short notice."

It was evident to me that Wilkins was not ready to concede all that I had said. He was a man of meager and superficial information, like many of his fellow citizens who are perfectly honest in their notions of things Catholic, and at the same time thoroughly ignorant. He was, however, somewhat disturbed. I had got under his skin and it made him a bit uncomfortable.

I played golf with him that afternoon, and golf is the most absorbing game in the world. One can't play golf and think of anything else under the sun. It would take an earthquake to distract a golfer, and even then he would wait until the shake was over and then drive for the next hole or the nearest crater. Our conversation about the Pope and Catholic allegiance was as completely erased from his mind as if it had been wiped out by a wet sponge on a dry slate. Besides, he beat me by two holes. He crowed exultantly over my defeat.

"You may beat me at an argument, Mr. Editor," he said to me when we arrived at the nineteenth hole (I explain that the nineteenth hole used to be "hard" before prohibition, but now is entirely "soft"), "but when it comes to golf, you are not in it."

BELIEVING AS ONE PLEASES

One morning I sought a seat in the smoker on the 8:30. There I found my friend Thompson busy over his newspaper. I sat down beside him, bidding him good morning.

"Hello!" he exclaimed, looking up with a radiant countenance when he saw me. "What do you think! I broke into the nineties yesterday!" (He was talking golf, a game in which I myself indulged, rather immoderately, I am afraid.) I was immediately regaled with an elaborated account of Thompson's achievement on the links the day before. He had his score card with him and went over it, hole by hole. Golf talk by a devotee is like the perennial flow of Tennyson's brook, "Men may come and men may go," etc., and my friend Thompson was a devotee and something of a duffer at the game. So his break into the nineties was an achievement for *him*. I listened with becoming interest, and as I had no dubious tale with which to parallel his, I let him talk himself out.

"Wonderful," I said. "You'll be getting down to scratch (a word not to be taken literally; it is metaphor of the links) before long."

"Well, it's darn good for me," he said with eminent enthusiasm and returned his score-card to his pocket. He then resumed his newspaper and I plunged into mine.

After a little while, he turned to me again and

pointed to a picture of Pius X in his paper. It accompanied a news item about the Pope's Encyclical on Modernism, which the newspapers were chronicling at the time as a special sensation in the religious world.

"You know," said Thompson, "that old Pope of yours has a wonderfully benevolent face. He seems to be a fine old man. You know," he went on as if apologizing for the admission, "I am very liberal-minded. I believe in letting every man believe as he pleases. That's real broad-mindedness." Now Thompson was a very nice fellow. I liked him. He had some very admirable traits. What he was trying to do was to put me at my ease, even though I was a Catholic. He wanted to show me that his broad-mindedness included even the Catholic Church.

"Well, frankly," I said, "I don't agree with you."

He gazed at me in profound astonishment, perplexed beyond measure.

"I mean," I went on, "that I don't believe that everybody has a right to believe what he pleases."

Thompson looked at me almost aghast. He could scarcely credit his senses. Was I as narrow-minded and bigoted as all that? I could read in his face, as plainly as if he had spoken it.

"Do you think that everybody has the right to interpret the Constitution of the United States as he pleases, and to put what construction he pleases on its articles, or on the statutes?" I asked.

"But that is very different," he answered. "That's law; that's not religion. I was talking about religion."

"I know you were. But why do you draw the distinction? Is religion a matter of less moment in our lives than law?"

"No, I don't mean that," he replied. "I only mean

that as a practical proposition we could not let everyone construe the law as he pleases. That would put everything at sixes and sevens and create endless confusion. It would be social anarchy."

"But when everyone believes as he pleases in religious matters, does not that put everything at sixes and sevens religiously and make endless confusion? Look at the six and seventy sects that Omar Khayyam flouts so contemptuously. So old Omar believes as he pleases, and he believes in *wine*. For that matter, look at the six hundred and seventy sects, and you have a welter of religious babel."

"But the whole modern world," retorted Thompson, "believes in religious freedom."

"Pardon me," I answered, "but it seems to me that the whole modern world believes in religious confusion. When you say religious freedom, you mean that you don't believe that the civil authority should constrain anybody legally to any particular religious belief. I quite agree with you in that. But by religious freedom I mean that I don't believe anyone has the moral right to believe as he pleases."

He was about to interrupt me.

"Pardon me, I know what you are about to say: that every man has the right to follow his own conscience. But has every man the right to make whatsoever kind of conscience he pleases? Has a man the right to form his conscience without regard to the moral law, that is, the dictates of a properly informed reason. There are the Ten Commandments, for instance, the great basic principles of Christian morality. Do you believe in the immorality that obtains beyond Suez, 'where the flying fishes play and there ain't no Ten Commandments,' as Kipling puts it in his "Mandalay"? Do

away with the Ten Commandments and you have moral anarchy."

Thompson looked reflectively out of the window. I seemed to have made some sort of an impression.

"Don't you think that conscience is a God-given faculty, by which every man is to guide——"

"Just a moment," I interrupted. "I have heard that before. But don't let us take for granted the sense in which you are using conscience. Conscience in the last analysis is simply man's intellect informed by his knowledge of the moral law and passing judgment in any particular instance upon this or that moral act. We are in the habit of speaking of conscience as some sort of a distinctive and separate human faculty, but it is really only our judgment of the right or wrong of a moral act in given circumstances. All you need to determine a moral judgment in any particular instance is your intelligence duly informed by moral principles. I know that it is a common notion that conscience is a sort of needle in a moral compass, somewhere in the human compound of body and soul, which swings right or left under the compulsion of some sort of mystic moral magnetism. As a matter of fact, it is nothing of the kind.

"I know, for instance, the moral precept, 'Thou shalt not steal.' I am tempted to purloin your pocket-book, which happens just now to be in your side pocket within ready abstraction, for I saw you put it there when you paid the conductor, but I forbear, not because there is some mysterious monitor within me which blindly determines my present abstinence from your property, but because I *know* the moral law and *choose* not to rob you. What is called conscience is made up of two factors: my knowledge that to steal

from you here and now is a violation of the moral precept, of which my intelligence is fully informed; and my will not to violate this precept in this given instance. I could, if I wanted to, but I won't. A pickpocket in my position would, for he could do it with perfect ease and without your knowing it. He might know the precept against stealing, and yet steal. Here his will over-rides the light of his knowledge. Or he might have been brought up in an environment, for instance in a thieves' slum, where the appropriation of other people's property without being caught is looked upon as a brilliant social virtue, shining with the crowning distinction of cleverness. In that case his intelligence is not enlightened, is uninformed or misinformed. In other words, he has a false conscience. All that I mean to point out here is that conscience is not a superior faculty in man, blindly prompting or restraining him under given circumstances, but is nothing more than human intelligence formed, unformed or misformed, about human conduct in moral acts."

Thompson was listening intently, with a good deal of surprise.

"You 'get me,' don't you?" I asked. He nodded.

"What I am pointing out is that conscience is not an unintelligent moral compass-needle deflected this way or that in some super-rational way, but is simply human reason judging here and now what is to be done. What is really meant by freedom of conscience is simply the power of the will to act or not act in a particular instance, whether it be in the region of intelligence or in the region of morality. I am free to build up a false conscience or stifle a true conscience, that is, I can do so if I choose, but I am not free of the responsibility and I do so at my peril. That is the only free-

dom of conscience within our power, and we must take the moral consequences.

"When you say that a man is free to believe what he pleases in religion, what you really mean is that a man can accept or reject by the determination of his will this creed or that creed or this or that part of a creed. But that he is morally free to accept or to make his own creed or any part of a creed at his pleasure is not true, any more than a man is free to make his own code of conduct to suit his own pleasure. In other words, just as in the region of morals a properly informed reason and rectitude of will are necessary for right conduct, so in the region of religion a correctly informed intelligence and rectitude of will are essential for right belief."

Thompson looked somewhat blank. I am afraid that he did not altogether "get me." So I determined to approach him from another side.

"You're an Episcopalian, aren't you?" I asked him. (He was one of the pillars of the Episcopalian Church in our town.)

"Yes, I am an Episcopalian," he answered.

"I suppose then you believe in the divinity of Christ?" He said he did. "By that I mean that you believe Christ was truly God incarnate, and further that He came on earth to teach men the way of salvation and those truths that He considered necessary to salvation, and that what He taught He taught unerringly." In all this Thompson affirmed his belief.

"Well, then, what did Christ say to the people about Him on this point of religious freedom? Did He tell them that they were free to believe what they pleased, or didn't He lay upon them the strict injunction under

the severest strictures that they must believe what He taught them?" Thompson looked startled.

"What's that!" he exclaimed. I repeated for him.

"You have, of course, read the New Testament?" I asked. He confessed that he had, but could not say that he was very familiar with it.

"At any rate, you can remember that Christ's teaching was very positive. There was neither doubt nor compromise in His doctrine. He commanded acceptance and demanded obedience to His teaching. He solemnly imposed injunctions, precepts and doctrines upon those who heard Him and threatened dire penalties against their violation. He spoke with solemn and full authority, saying that He had been sent with all power in Heaven and on earth. There were times when some of His followers refused to accept His teaching, declaring that His saying was hard to believe. He did not explain away the difficulty. They turned away from Him and He let them go. Take up the New Testament and search it a bit. Christ said again and again that unless you believe what I tell you, you shall be eternally lost. Do you think that a hard saying? Whether you do or not, it was His constant preaching imposed with the fullness of divine authority. What you call religious freedom, or the right to believe as one pleases, was never Christ's teaching."

"I never thought of it in that way before," said Thompson.

I could see that he was bewildered and surprised. The "believe-as-you-please" notion he had accepted as the shibboleth of the hour, and had never attempted to square it with his Christian faith. By this time we had come into the city terminal. Thompson went his way and I mine.

That afternoon I saw him on the 5:30 several seats ahead of me. He was talking animatedly, with his score card in his hand, to the man next to him. That wonderful golf game was being played over again on the 5:30. Golf is an absorbing pastime and I have seen complaints by preachers reported in the newspapers that golf was taking the place of religion in this materialistic age. Well, if one has the right to believe as one pleases, why not believe in golf?

I do not know that my conversation with Thompson on the "believe-as-you-please" theory made any impression. I never had any evidence that it did, for Thompson never after alluded to it, and whenever he met me on trains or otherwhere, he always talked golf.

BASCOMBE AND GOD

Bascombe was his name. He didn't believe in God. He didn't carry a sign around his neck saying, "I am an atheist," as blind beggars label their affliction, "I am blind." But he let no opportunity pass by to thrust upon his friends and acquaintances that he had utterly chucked overboard the superstition of a God. He posed as an intellectual, a completely emancipated intellectual, captain of his fate and master of his soul, or whatever he called that entity which stood in place of the soul in Bascombe's composition.

"Man is simply a chemical compound," he was wont to aver, "which dissolves in the course of time into its aboriginal elements, and poof! that's all there is to it." He would distend his cheeks and make a characteristic gesture whenever he announced this dogmatic finality of his creedless creed, shrugging his shoulders deprecatingly, extending his right arm with elbow crooked, and spreading his hands apart with a fanlike fling of his fingers, as though he were scattering the disrupted and gaseous elements of the human compound into space. God was just as airily and readily gesticulated out of existence. One almost expected the sun to go out in darkness and the heavens to shrivel up at the word of Bascombe.

I was standing in the station one day waiting for the 8:30, casually talking to Bascombe, when a casket heaped with flowers was wheeled by on a truck toward

the forward end of the platform for shipment aboard the baggage car. I raised my hat and murmured a little prayer, as was my wont on such occasions.

Bascombe gazed with hard eyes.

"Silly sentiment, all this flummery of funerals," he remarked.

"A profoundly human sentiment, I should say," I answered. "Even pagans and savages have regard for their dead."

"Mere superstition, mere superstition, which intelligent people are rapidly outgrowing. That's only a handful of rapid decomposition," pointing to the casket. "Why make all this fuss and feathers over it? As for me, when I peter out," and he smiled with a sort of jaunty bravado as he said the words, "all I shall require is a good hot fire, and poof! I am completely done for." Here followed his stereotyped gesture of finality.

Just then the 8:30 pulled into the station and we scrambled aboard. Scrambling for seats is a daily pastime of commuters. Bascombe was just ahead of me. He seized a vacant seat and beckoned me to share it with him. I couldn't very well decline, though I had no predilection for the company of a man who constantly and irritatingly thrust his foolish opinions upon unwilling neighbors. It was like sitting alongside of a man with a bad breath who conversationally nudges up close to you and gives you the full benefit of his halitosis.

"Yes," resumed Bascombe as we were seated. "Just cremate me and scatter my ashes to the four winds."

I didn't want to be uncharitable, but I came near devoutly wishing that Bascombe might be on his cos-

mic journey at that moment. I realized that I was in for it, so I made up my mind to make the best of an unpleasant bargain.

"I see," I said. "Your dust on the winds is the end of it. The be-all and end-all of life! Nothing ultimately to answer for, all responsibility wiped out by a simple bonfire, the good and the bad of life indiscriminately canceled as if they never had been!"

"Just so," answered Bascombe. "Only I would put it a little differently: the foolish riddle of living sponged out by the inevitable riddle of death.

> "Into this universe, and why not knowing
> Nor whence, like water willy-nilly flowing;
> And out of it, as wind along the waste,
> I know not whither, willy-nilly blowing.

"Good stuff, that of old Omar Khayyam. Beats all the religions ever invented, doesn't it?"

"It certainly is an easy way of shirking moral responsibilities, and a lazy way of evading intellectual obligations. It seems to me the refuge of a mental and moral coward," I said looking Bascombe squarely in the eyes.

He flushed up.

"I say, that's putting it rather strong. Do you mean to call me a——"

"I mean this, Bascombe, that a man who refuses to face life as it is and slumps weakly into the soft sensualism of Omar's lubricous doctrine has abdicated reason and abandoned courage."

"It seems to me that's only another way of calling names," said Bascombe with some heat. "You are not fair. All I meant is that Omar's verses put the matter rather aptly. We don't know any more about our-

selves than he says. We come from nothing and go to nothing. Isn't that so?"

I shook my head emphatically. "Not a bit of it. We are created by God Almighty and have immortal souls."

This I knew to be an unexpected broadside to Bascombe, a crude and medieval statement calculated to shock his delicate skepticism. He looked at me askance. I had rudely outraged his dilettanteism.

"Why," he exclaimed, "why fling that chunk of thirteenth-century superstition at my head? This is the twentieth century. You know as well as I that we have outlived all that nonsense. God has evaporated like a dark miasma in the sunlight of scientific progress."

He sat back with a self-approving smile, and gazed complacently upon my obvious inferiority. There was a supercilious manner about Bascombe that was extremely nettling. He stood upon peaks of his own assumption and looked down upon inferior minds below. He was shedding light into your intellectual darkness.

"I understand, of course," he waved his hand airily, "that belief in God and the hereafter was good enough in the olden days when people didn't know things as we know them. They used to believe that the earth was flat and the sun went around it, you know. They used to believe that God made the first man and woman in a garden with a snake, and all that sort of thing."

"And now?" I inquired.

"Science has shown us that the earth is round and revolves about the sun, and that man has evolved from lower forms to higher through long ages up to——"

"Funny, isn't it?" I injected with some sarcasm in my voice.

"Funny, how so?" he answered in surprise.

"That the cosmos has labored all these long ages to produce us just to dissipate us into airy nothingness again, as you yourself put it a moment ago"; and I mimicked his favorite gesture to indicate the futile end of our luckless humanity.

"You don't believe in God, but I do," I continued after a pause, for he was somewhat puzzled at my sudden application of his own conclusion. "The certainty of God gives me a well-grounded explanation of the universe. With God back of it, it has a meaning. But without God, it is just a congeries of phenomena, 'full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.' Science, as you understand it, tells you that the world grew up just like Topsy, without rhyme or reason, as far as you are concerned. You are only a handful of dust, momentarily gathered together, to be presently blown back again into space. You are a mere ephemera, the creature of a day, and all you can get out of life is to seize the moment as it flies. I can quite understand your espousal of Omar's philosophy. Logically it is all that is given you. You may sip your pleasures daintily, or gulp them grossly, as your disposition inclines you, but the moment death touches you, you are done for for ever. If this train should jump the track and break your neck, your brief span would come to an abrupt end. Nature, which you say evolved you without reason, would snuff you out with just as little reason."

Bascombe winced a bit at the brutal suggestion.

"Not a pleasant contemplation, is it?" I asked.

"Look here," he said, and for the first time he dropped his superior air, "why suggest such dreadful

things? But aren't you in the same boat with me? It would be just the same for you as for me."

"No, I'm not in the same boat. I am only in the same car with you. My boat is faith, faith in God, in His love, in His goodness, in His mercy, in His justice, in an eternal life hereafter. Your boat is rank unfaith, denial, a blind rejection of reason, of love, of hope——"

"But that's nothing but superstition," he interrupted. "A blind belief just as unreasonable as you say denial is. What do you know about God? You can't prove even that He is."

"You've just used the word unreasonable, Bascombe. I take it then that you believe at least in reason, that reason is in some way a measure or a norm by which you may arrive at some idea of the truth or reality of things. In other words, you are a rational being who exercises his reason to come to a conclusion. You just alleged that my belief in God was a mere superstition, something against reason. I say, on the contrary, that reason confirms my belief in God. I even say that reason proves that there is a God. Let us test my faith in God at the bar of reason."

Bascombe adjusted his eyeglasses which were attached to a wide silk cord fluently encircling his neck, and looked at me with a humorous scrutiny, as if I were some sort of strange specimen whose queerness had never struck him before.

"Oh, come, come," he said, "that's a good medieval joke. Prove that there is a God! Why, Dr. Simplicissimus, your outlook is hopelessly Gothic, diametrically at variance with modern psychology."

"That's not the point, Bascombe, whether I am or am not in gear with modern psychology—which, by

the way, is not psychology at all, but a neuro-physiology, painfully groping among the obscure complexities of the nervous system. The real question is, Can we arrive at the existence of God by reason? and by reason I mean the intellect advancing from a known truth to another not immediately seen."

Bascombe shrugged his shoulders, the perfect picture of a tolerant skepticism, sure of its own infallibility.

I pulled out my watch and held it up to him.

"Here is an intricate piece of mechanism, constructed for the purpose of marking the time. You can readily see that it must have had a maker."

"Oh, that's the old Paley argument from design. Out of date long ago." And he made his ready gesture of finality.

"Yes, old, if you like, but why out of date? Watches themselves are older than Paley's argument, but are they out of date and worthless because old? The sun and moon in the heavens—nature's timepieces—are older still. Are they, therefore, out of date? Human reason is as old as man, is it out of date? I appeal to your reason, an ancient faculty, which still survives in man, to come to the point, and drop the childish quibble that only new things are true things. Pardon me, but you are not using your reason. You are simply barricading yourself behind a stale prejudice——"

"You are insulting my intelligence," blurted Bascombe testily.

"On the contrary, I am trying to rescue it from the folly of suicide. To be honest with yourself, doesn't your intelligence aver that this watch could not have made itself, that its parts, fitting so accurately one with the other in such harmonious adjustments, could

not fortuitously have come together? In short, that it is a striking evidence of the design of its maker."

"Well, what of that? That only proves that this watch was designed by the man that made it," assented Bascombe.

"Good!" I exclaimed. "Then intelligence can see design in the thing designed and infer the designer. It makes no difference whether it be a watch or an engine, say the engine pulling our train at this moment, a complicated machine designed for the purpose it is performing now. The watch and the engine are obvious illustrations of a twofold rational principle, that every effect has an adequate cause, and that the cause in some way pre-contains the virtue of the effect. We have, in both instances of the watch and the engine, the embodiment of intelligent design in a combined whole to a unique and specific end. The intelligent adaptation and coördination of means to the intended end proclaims the intelligence of the cause or the maker. The mind is driven inevitably to recognize a cause and to declare that the cause is intelligent."

"That's obvious enough," said Bascombe. "In the particular instances you have given I admit it, but that's a long way from proving that there is a God. Great philosophers have told us that what you call God is unknowable.

"Let's leave great philosophers out of the question for the moment. I am not appealing to authority but to reason, which is just the same in you and me as in the great philosophers. You have just admitted a fundamental principle of reason, that every effect has an adequate cause, in which in some way the virtue of the effect is pre-contained. That is reason speaking as absolutely to you and me as to any philosopher

under the sun. No philosopher can gainsay it. And you yourself witnessed to its force in your admission. Indeed, you cannot escape it any more than the proposition that two and two make four."

"Wait a moment, doctor. But do two and two always and everywhere make four?" and Bascombe smiled superiorly at me. "May not two and two somewhere else, say in another world, on some other planet, make five? I remember reading once—I think it was in an article by the great Huxley—that it may be in another world different from ours that two and two may not be two and two. What do we know of another world existing under different conditions than our own?"

"My dear fellow," I answered, "forget it. Your great Huxley was simply talking through his hat. He was trying to escape just as you are from the inevitability of logic. He was talking nonsense in order to escape sense. Reason is always reason, here and everywhere. To postulate another world, where reason is not reason, is to invoke an intrinsic contradiction, is to make 'is' and 'is not' one and the same thing. The only place where that might be indulged in is a lunatic asylum, and even in Bedlam, where a crazy man may imagine himself a glass chicken, he never imagines himself a glass chicken and not a glass chicken at the same time. It's a silly philosophy that bases itself upon nonsense—Huxley or no Huxley."

"You're the most dogmatic person I ever talked to," asserted Bascombe.

"Have it as you please," I answered. "If holding that two and two make four and can't make anything else is being dogmatic, I accept the imputation; but let's get back to our point. My rational principle is

that we know design when we see it and when we find it in an effect we know it to be in some way in the cause of that effect. You admit the logic of this in the instance of the watch and the engine. Let us take another instance even more striking—ourselves. You and I are men, vastly superior in every way to a watch or an engine. We are the designers and makers of engines. We put our intelligence into these pieces of mechanism and we are vastly more than the works of our hands. We are more than mechanism; we are sentient, rational beings. Our bodies are elaborately, delicately and precisely constructed, so designed that they are constantly renewing themselves out of their own energies, which seize upon and assimilate their environment into their own beings. Every organ of our bodies is related to every other organ, and marvelously coördinated to the integrity of our life. We possess not only sentient, but rational life, which is the higher part of our nature. We feel, we think, we will. We are all the rest of the world in microcosms. In us the visible universe is mirrored and compacted. We dominate the animal world, and harness the forces of nature to our purposes. 'What a piece of work is a man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! The beauty of the world! the paragon of animals!' You are familiar with the pregnant words of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Well, who made this paragon, gave him life, endowed him with power and faculty, and placed him on the stage of the visible universe to the fulfilment of his marvelous destiny?"

"Bravo! Bravo!" exclaimed Bascombe. "You talk eloquently. You should have been a preacher," and he

gently applauded. There was just a touch of derision in his voice. I ignored it.

"But answer my question. Who made us?"

"As for that," he answered, "we evolved. The paragon called man came up from lower forms——"

"Let us for the nonce suppose that to be so. I myself do not believe in evolution. To me it is merely an unproved hypothesis; but I will assume it for the moment. You came from your immediate human forbears. They in turn from theirs, and so on back until you reach the final human link, where the brute on the other side in some way became man by a slow process or by a sudden leap. Evolution does not explain how. But we will hypothetically take the jump. Brute begets brute through the long ages in the dark, backward abysm of time, higher forms of life coming from lower, until we get to the simplest and most primitive, the original speck of life. Here we arrive at another tremendous gap between life and no-life. We'll jump that, too. Now we have only matter, mere star-dust, if you like; molecules or atoms, call them what you will. Who made these? And, granting your sweeping hypothesis, pray, who endowed these particles of matter with all the potentialities of the universe as we see it in actuality, to unfold one form of life after another, through lower to higher, through fish, reptile, bird and beast, up to the rational animal, the culmination of the process, the paragon of all?"

"How should I know? How should anyone know?" answered Bascombe. "That's just the crux of it. We're up against something beyond human comprehension, a blank wall. Why should anyone bother about it? It's a futile quest."

"Is it, though?" I shot back at him. "This is just

the point where reason comes in to illuminate the way most perspicuously. Use your reason. Why lie down cravenly and surrender to a flabby skepticism? Reason shows you that the watch and the engine have a design and maker. Why, then, doesn't reason point out to you just as assuredly that the world has a design and a maker?"

"But there's a great difference between the watch and the world," answered Bascombe. "The watch is a very small object, quite within our understanding, but the world, the cosmos, is so vast, so huge, so enormous ——"

I interrupted Bascombe's string of tautological epithets.

"What in the name of common sense has size to do with it? The clock in the Metropolitan Tower is ten thousand times bigger than my watch, but it is just as easily comprehensible that it had a maker. Logic and reason have nothing to do with bigness or smallness. An elephant is just as comprehensible as a mouse. The point is that wherever you see intelligence in an effect, big or little, reason at once infers intelligence in the cause."

"But the cosmos is so tremendously complex," put in Bascombe.

"That again has nothing to do with my point. Complexity has no more to do with it than has magnitude. Reason can just as easily infer from the cosmos to its maker as from the watch to its maker."

"Yes, though we can understand that a watch has a beginning, we can't understand that the cosmos had a beginning."

"And why not?" I asked. "A beginning is a beginning, of no matter what—watch, engine, man or the

world. You began, I began and everything in the series of beings which make up the world once began. If everything in the series once began, the whole series had a beginning. Any number of successive particular beginnings simply link back to the first beginning. Trace the series according to your evolutionary beginnings back to the first term in the series, star-dust, atom, molecule, electron or anything you please to call it. It doesn't matter how far back that first goes. When you reach the first term, you must postulate by the very necessity of your reason that there is something beyond which does not come within your series, an underived self-existent being upon which the entire series depends. That is what I mean by God, an independent self-existent being, self-sufficient and absolute. The fact that the world is made up of a series of dependent and contingent beings demands as their first cause an independent and necessary being, underived, uncreated, beyond which there can be no other."

"You are tremendously metaphysical," declared Bascombe. There was a slight emphasis of contempt on the word metaphysical.

"Simply rational, that's all," I retorted. "What you call metaphysical is only common sense refined, namely, reason, alert, penetrating and conclusive in its findings. Pardon me, Bascombe, but when you speak of the science of metaphysics as if it were an intellectual pariah, you are only echoing the shallow cant of a certain school of moderns who are really afraid of following reason to its ultimates. Reason leads to God; but that's metaphysics, they shout, and don't realize that they are really belittling human reason. If you think at all, you must get back to God."

Bascombe shrugged his shoulders.

"We will never agree," he answered with his characteristic gesture.

"I am not finished yet," I continued. "You cannot account for the world without a maker, as I have just shown you, for a series of finite, dependent and contingent beings could never have made themselves. In other words, the world must have an efficient cause, and that is God. Let us repeat in detail, so as to make the matter perfectly clear. Dependent and finite beings require an infinite being back of them; in other words, finite beings are insufficient for themselves. Contingent beings, that is, beings whose non-existence is recognized as possible, demand the existence of a necessary being. You cannot dismiss all this by labeling it metaphysical, for you are only flouting your own reason. Furthermore, there is motion in the world. I do not mean simply locomotion, I mean the passing from power to act. Take your graduated series of beings in the world from primitive atoms to man; they have all passed from potentiality to actuality, have moved from possibility to actuality. Who set this series in motion? A first mover who is necessarily unmoved; for if the prime mover could be moved, it would have been from potentiality to act, which in its case involves a contradiction in terms, namely, an actuality which is under the same respect a potentiality. That prime mover is God."

"Good gracious, but all this is very abstract, thin and dry," said Bascombe. "Really you make my head buzz with all your attenuated abstractions."

"I suppose so, Bascombe, but they are not so attenuated as you think. They are simply new to you. There is a science of reason, simple enough when you have grasped its principles and its terms, just like any

other science. All I want to say is that it is rash to deny its validity and its conclusions unless you really understand it."

"Which means," said Bascombe with a wry smile, "that fools rush in, etc."

"Oh, don't let's put it quite so brutally," I smilingly answered. "I only want to insist that no man should criticize what he hasn't given fair consideration. Metaphysics is a science, and needs to be studied and pondered. A careful man watches his step. Even in the subway we are told to watch our step."

"Not much metaphysics about that," remarked Bascombe dryly. It was a faint glimmer of a sense of humor in a staid, punctilious and conventional gentleman. He settled back in his seat with an evident sense of relief, adjusting his glasses and resting his hands on his cane, as if our talk had come to an end. But I went on:

"Lest the full force of the argument should be missed, let me point out another consideration. You remember, I offered this watch (I held my watch up to him again) as an object which obviously had a maker. This you were pleased to concede. The watch shows design and purpose. You at once deduced the fact that its maker possessed intelligence. Never for an instant did you conceive that the maker of the watch was another watch, nor that the watch existed in the mind of its maker as you perceive it in my hand, a number of bits of metal, adjusted and correlated into the mechanical contrivance we call a watch. In the mind of its maker, the watch preëxisted as an idea, what metaphysicians—or if you object to the word, philosophers or thinkers—call the prototype of the watch. You saw design and purpose in the watch;

you therefore inferred back to intelligence in the maker. Now the world shows design and purpose. You see order in the world; you see it operating under the regimen of wide and far-reaching laws. You see in it a vast hierarchy of beings, ranged in an orderly and ascending series from inanimate matter to the rational animal called man. Design, order and purpose, intelligence in the world; therefore, in its maker, design, order and intelligence preëxisting in prototype. It is your reason saying this. This is what I call God—infinite intelligence, the efficient cause of the world, its creator, self-existent, independent, absolute. Your reason tells you that He is, and to deny Him is to deny your reason. There is this difference between the maker of the watch and the maker of the world; the maker of the world made it out of nothing preëxisting. He created the world in its totality, its substance and all. Unlike the maker of the watch, He had no need of preëxisting parts to put His design into execution externally to Himself."

Bascombe sat uncompromisingly rigid. His attitude, I could sense, was resentful. He did not like being pinned down.

"I don't believe it," he said.

"My dear man, I am not asking you to believe it. I am asking you to see it. If you refuse to see it, you are simply repudiating your own reason."

I did not finish the sentence, for just then the train gave a horrible lurch. There was a grinding of brakes, a violent and sudden stoppage, and we were thrown forward out of our seats. There was consternation in the car; a confused murmur arose, punctuated with shrieks from frightened women passengers, and startled ejaculations from no less frightened men. We

pulled ourselves together as best we could in a moment. Nobody seemed to have suffered any physical injury. We had been pretty violently jostled, and some badly shocked. As usual in such circumstances, the male contingent rushed to the platform and off the train to find out what had happened. We had struck a truck crossing the track. The truck had been completely demolished, but the driver had saved himself by jumping.

Our engine had been derailed and fallen over on its side. Escaping steam made an almost deafening noise and a dense cloud of vapor enveloped the wreck. The engineer, we learned—for we could not see him—lay pinned under the overturned mass of metal.

I for one grew sick when I heard it. Bascombe, who accompanied me, was white to the lips. "Good God!" I heard him exclaim.

Prone on the ground, as near as he could get to the wrecked engine and keep away from the hot steam vapor that hissed from the boiler, lay the conductor, evidently talking to the pinned man beneath. I could only catch a word now and then.

"Yes—coming, Murphy. Courage, old man."

Just then the brakeman, accompanied by a man wearing a Roman collar, pushed his way through the crowd.

"Under there, Father," he said to the man with the Roman collar. "He has been calling for a priest."

The man with the Roman collar dropped down alongside of the conductor. A word passed between them and the man with the Roman collar proceeded to crawl under the engine. He flinched for an instant, as the cloud of vapor enveloped him, then dragged himself forward again. We held our breath, and

watched with thumping hearts. It seemed an eternity, but it could not have been more than three minutes when the man with the Roman collar emerged slowly backward from out of the vapor clouds. The conductor and brakeman seized him and lifted him to his feet. His face and hands were dreadfully red and scorched, but I could see that his skin was still intact. I thanked God heartily. He looked at the conductor and nodded. I could just hear him say, "It's all right. I gave him absolution. He died happily in my arms."

The conductor and brakeman supporting the priest between them led him away, for he seemed very groggy. I was not aware of it at first—so intent was I upon the scene—but Bascombe had gripped me tightly by the arm. He was deathly pale, and his utterance was thick.

"Why did he do that? He might have been scalded to death under there."

"Yes, he might have been," I answered. "He braved that peril to prepare the man under the engine to meet his God. You see, Bascombe, the man under the engine and the man with the Roman collar knew that a man is something more than an ephemeral handful of dust."

SKELTON AND CONFESSION

"By the bye, Doctor," said Skelton, who was sitting next to me on the 5:30 that afternoon, "here is something that might interest you." He fished out a letter from among several in his pocket and handed it to me.

What prompted him I don't know, for we had been talking about nothing relating to the contents of the letter, which was from a Father Durken, saying that he was enclosing a cashier's check in the sum of five thousand dollars, as restitution under the Seal of Confession to Skelton's firm (a firm of contractors) from a penitent who had asked him to transmit it.

"What do you think of that?" asked Skelton. "I didn't know we had been mulcted of any such sum and I don't know how it was stolen. The letter came in this morning's mail."

"Someone who once defrauded you of that amount," I answered, "is simply paying you back. A case of conscience. He evidently went to confession and couldn't get absolution until he had made restitution."

"That's it, is it?" said Skelton, shifting his cigar—he was forever chewing an unlighted cigar—to the other side of his mouth. "Your confession business is something I know nothing of," said Skelton. "That's the reason I showed you the letter. I want to find out who it was returned the money through this priest. I'd like to get hold of the scoundrel and send him up to Sing Sing."

Again Skelton shifted his cigar and turned to me with a hard glint in his eyes. He was a clean-shaven individual with a lean, protruding underjaw, now thrust out vindictively. As I sat looking into his face, it was harsh and ugly with a certain ruthlessness of expression. He had the reputation of being an exceptionally successful business man; I realized why, as I looked into his face at that moment. A keen, pushing, unsparing and merciless type of countenance. To have money stolen from him—and this without his discovering it—was to him the one breaking of the Decalogue which was unforgivable. I had often wondered if business success in any large way did not require a temperament without bowels of mercy. Skelton, as he now manifested himself to me, seemed the embodiment of that driving power which brooks no restraint and over-rides all obstacles without compunction.

"I don't know why you should be vindictive, Skelton, over the matter. It seems to me that you ought rather to rejoice, like the housewife in the Bible who had lost her groat and then found it. You weren't even aware of your loss—I suppose some subcontractor defrauded you—and here, suddenly, is a substantial sum thrust into your hands (just like finding money) through the Confessional."

"Umph," grunted Skelton. "That's all right, but the thief ought to be punished. Justice ought to be vindicated."

"I wonder if you really mean all that in your heart, Skelton? Isn't there just a little personal resentment and a desire for revenge, on your part?"

"No, sir," declared Skelton, with explosive emphasis. "I believe in the law up to the hilt."

"An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth?" I asked.

"Yes, sir, if you want to put it in that way," answered Skelton. "I am going to that priest to demand the name of the man who made restitution."

"You may just as well spare yourself the pains," I said with a suppressed smile at the thought of Skelton's utter ignorance of the Sacrament of Penance in the Catholic Church. "That priest would never reveal to you or anyone else that man's identity, even if you were to put him on the rack and tear him piecemeal apart."

"Eh, what's that?" exclaimed Skelton.

"Just what I said," I replied. "The Seal of Confession in the Catholic Church is inviolable. No priest has ever been known to reveal what has been told him under the Seal of Confession in all the history of the Catholic Church, and that history goes back for two thousand years. Not even renegade priests have ever been known to break that seal, and there have been priests who have suffered martyrdom rather than reveal what has been confided to them in the Confessional."

"Can that be true?" asked Skelton, as his cigar almost dropped out of his mouth.

"Absolutely so," I answered.

"That's the most astonishing thing I have ever heard," he declared.

"Perhaps it is," I answered. "Nevertheless it's true. Now you understand how slim a chance you have of ever getting from Father Durken the name of the man who has returned the stolen money to you. You might just as well think of plucking the sun and moon out of the heavens."

Skelton said nothing, but, biting off the end of his cigar, took a fresh grip on it.

"I am surprised," I went on, "that you didn't know it. The law recognizes the confidential relation between penitent and confessor. No court in the land would attempt to force a priest to divulge anything he had learned from a penitent in the Confessional. That law also applies to the confidential relation between doctor and patient, and lawyer and client. I don't know, but there may be circumstances when doctor or lawyer may be required to divulge what they have heard from patient or client; but in the case of the priest, never. Catholic discipline in regard to the inviolability of the Confessional is adamant."

Skelton reflected for a moment and then asked, "What did you exactly mean when you said that the man who returned the stolen money could not get absolution until he made restitution?"

"I think that the best way of answering that will be by explaining to you what the tribunal of penance, or what is commonly called the Confessional, is, in the Catholic Church. First of all, how came there to be such a thing in the Catholic Church? What warrant has the Catholic Church for setting up such a tribunal, and requiring her members to make what is called a confession? First of all, we hold that it was established by Christ Himself. I suppose you will admit that Christ had the power to forgive sin. Are you yourself a Christian, Skelton?"

"A sort of one, I suppose," answered Skelton. "I am not much on religion. I guess I believe even now a good deal that I was taught when I was youngster, though I confess I have paid very little attention to it in recent years. I have been too busy."

"Very good. Let it go at that," I said. "There's a scene in the New Testament in which Christ said to the man sick of the palsy: 'Thy sins are forgiven thee,' and the scribes, who were professional interpreters of the law in the Jewish synagogues, were very much shocked to hear Him. 'Why doth this man speak thus? He blasphemeth. Who can forgive sins but God only?' But Jesus seeing their thoughts said to them: 'Whether is easier, to say, Thy sins are forgiven thee; or to say, Arise and walk? But that you may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then said he to the man sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go into thy house.'

"You see that Christ did forgive sins, and in view of the question of the scribes, He meant to show them that He was God. He wrought a miracle to attest this, by curing the man sick of the palsy. All through the New Testament you will find Christ working miracles in proof of His divinity. He cures the lame, the halt and the blind, and raises the dead to life. The Gospel narratives are filled with His miracles, and nothing stands out more strikingly in them than these manifestations of His power as God. Granting that He is God, He could, of course, delegate the power of forgiving sin to others, and in fact did so, as the Gospel shows. To Peter He said: 'And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven and whatsoever thou shall loose upon earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven.' Now Christ came to save sinners, and to remit their sins. The keys of the kingdom of heaven mean the power to remit sins or not to remit them—this is the interpre-

tation of the Catholic Church which gave us the Bible and which has always been the appointed interpreter of the Bible. To bind and to loose is to bind and to loose sin. That power was, as you see by the Bible itself, given directly to Peter as head of the Church, for whom Christ had prayed especially that he might confirm his brethren in the Faith. In healing the palsied man, Christ declared that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins. Here He promises that what the apostles bind or loose on earth, God in Heaven will likewise bind or loose. Binding and loosing refers not to physical, but to spiritual or moral bonds, among which sin is certainly included, and the more so because the power here granted is unlimited, as you will readily understand from Christ's words, '*whatsoever* you shall bind' —'*whatsoever* you shall loose.' The power is also judicial. Later Christ said to all the apostles: 'Amen, I say to you, whatsoever you shall bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven, and whatsoever you shall loose upon earth, shall be loosed in heaven.' Is that clear?"

Skelton twisted his cigar to the other side of his mouth. "Well, I don't believe everything you claim," he said, "but what you say seems to be pretty clear, as far as I can see it. I see what you are driving at. Go ahead."

"I am not asking you to accept everything I am saying, Skelton. I am simply explaining to you what the Catholic Church means by the Confession and stating the Catholic grounds for it. What I am immediately pointing out is that Christ had the power to forgive sins and exercised it, and proved His power by

working a miracle, in the instance of the man with the palsy, to show that He had such power.

"That is my first point. I think that is pretty evident from the Gospel I have just quoted. Now, the second point is that inasmuch as Christ could forgive sins, He certainly also had the power of conferring that faculty on others. This logically follows, as you no doubt see."

"All right, go ahead. We won't argue over it. I understand what you mean."

"Now let me add another quotation from the Gospel. This time, from the Gospel of St. John. Christ is speaking to all the apostles: 'As the Father hath sent me, I also send you. When He said this He breathed on them and He said to them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven them, and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained.' That seems to me pretty plain speaking, and the sense of these words is quite obvious. What Christ had previously stated in figurative language—'bind' and 'loose'—He now reiterates in the plainest terms—'sins,' 'forgive,' 'retain.'

"He had prefaced this by declaring the mission of the apostles to be similar to that which He had received from the Father and which He had fulfilled: 'As the Father hath sent me, I also send you.' It is beyond doubt that He came into the world to destroy sin, and that on more than one occasion He explicitly forgave sin, and therefore the forgiving of sins is to be included in the mission of the apostles. You will note that the power given the apostles is twofold, namely, to forgive *or* to retain. The apostles are not told to grant forgiveness indiscriminately; they must act judiciously, forgiving or retaining according as the sinner

declares his sins. Now, how are they to know what sins to retain or what sins to remit, unless they have been informed of these sins specifically by the sinner who committed them? Christ says *'whose sins,'* which clearly implies the declaration by the sinner of his sins. The sentence pronounced by the apostles—remission or retention of sins—is also God's sentence. By the authority given by God Himself, the power of forgiving or retaining sins was also immediately bestowed upon the apostles, but as the apostles were to pass away and be succeeded by others, that power was to be transmitted to those others under the same authority which Christ had granted to the apostles themselves. It was not a personal prerogative, to cease at their death. It was granted to them in their official capacity, and hence was to exist as a permanent institution in the Church. Christ must then have intended that the power to forgive be transmitted from the apostles to their successors as long as there would be sinners in the Church, and that means to the end of time. That is the foundation of what we call the Sacrament of Penance.

"Let me draw an analogy for you. When the Government of the United States was instituted, and the Constitution of the United States drawn up, certain powers were granted to the Federal Government, and, among others, the power of the judiciary to interpret the laws and determine what was constitutional and what was not. Now surely that power was not granted simply to those of the generation who were living at the time of the founding of the Republic, but for the whole future life of the Republic. Those powers were therefore to be transmitted to the judicial successors of those to whom the grant was first given. They

were given the power to bind or to loose, and that power survives to-day under the authority that was given in the beginning. It was not an indiscriminate grant, but one which was to be exercised specifically in every particular case that should arise. The Federal judges who exercise this power must hear the particular cases that are brought to them, with all their circumstances and conditions, before they can determine and decide the case submitted to their adjudication. Isn't that reasonable? So, too, in the tribunal of penance in the Catholic Church, must the particular cases, with all their circumstances and conditions, be heard before the judges in the forum of conscience can determine what to bind or what to loose."

Skelton was vigorously chewing away at his unlighted cigar, and I could see that he was revolving in his mind the parallel I had drawn. "That looks all right," he said. "I catch your meaning."

"So far, so good, then," I said. "What we have got now is the institution or foundation of the tribunal of penance.

"Now let us turn to the question: 'What constitutes the Sacrament of Penance practiced in the Catholic Church?' You remember, you asked me at the start for an explanation. I said that the man who had stolen your money couldn't get absolution without restitution. Now, the Sacrament of Penance consists essentially of three things: sorrow for sins committed; a firm purpose of amendment, which means that the penitent has resolved never to commit sin again; and lastly, absolution. Absolution is the exercise of the power of binding or loosing. After the penitent has confessed all his sins with their circumstances, and manifested his contrition and his firm purpose of

amendment, the priest gives him absolution or not, as he is satisfied or not with the genuineness and sincerity of the confession. The power of the priest as exercised is the power of the keys as originally granted by Christ to the apostles and their successors. The priest is a successor of the apostles, coming in direct line of descent from the time of Christ. (I am not just now arguing that descent; I am simply pointing out that it had its foundation in the original institution of the Church by Christ Himself.) Now, let us take the specific instance that you brought to my attention by showing me your letter from Father Durken. The man who stole the money from you went to confession, told of his theft. The judge in the tribunal of penance, who is the priest, and who must determine the sincerity and genuineness of the penitent, informed him at once that he must make restitution of the money he had stolen from you, or otherwise he could give him no absolution. You must remember that the priest can withhold and indeed must withhold absolution unless he feels morally certain of the sincerity of the penitent. Indeed, I may say here that if the penitent be insincere in his sorrow and his firm purpose of amendment, even if the priest, deceived by him, thought that he was sincere, and outwardly pronounced absolution over him, it would not be efficacious, because the disposition was insincere. Such a confession defeats its own purpose. You can understand that when I say that what is essential to a moral act of this nature, that is, genuineness of sorrow and amendment, are absent, there is no such moral act. You see the difference between confession in the forum of conscience, and confession in an external forum, as in a court of law. A man may

externally deceive a judge, and a man in the confessional can also externally deceive the priest, but he cannot deceive God Almighty who sees into the very conscience itself. Therefore, if he does deceive the priest in confession, he is simply making the act void. He receives no absolution; and, moreover, is committing another sin by misusing the tribunal of penance.

There are three things absolutely essential to a good confession: first, sorrow; second, firm purpose of amendment, that is a genuine resolution never to commit sin again; and third, the absolution given by the priest. The effect is deliverance from sin—reconciliation with God. What is remitted is both the guilt and the eternal punishment which is due to sin. I am speaking here of grave sins, what the Catholic Church calls 'mortal' sins. Sin, you understand, is an offense against God—the turning away from God with the refusal to abide by His law.

"Now, while the guilt and the eternal punishment of mortal sin is remitted by the absolution given by the priest, there remains some indebtedness to Divine Justice. You remember, you wanted to see the culprit who had wronged you brought to justice—legal justice, in your mind. Now, your idea that wrong must be righted by balancing the account is perfectly natural and founded in the essential nature of things, that is, order. When order is broken, things can only become right again by mending the breach in some way. Otherwise disorder would be stronger than order. This would lead to anarchy. A man who has broken the civil law must satisfy the civil order by some sort of punishment, imposed upon him by the civil authority.

"This also holds in the moral order. The satisfaction

of justice in the moral order, by way of a penalty of some sort, is imposed by the priest upon the penitent. In the case of the man who wronged you, he must restore to you that which he has unjustly taken from you. Having done this, he must repay Divine Justice for his breaking of the divine law. A certain penance by way of satisfaction is therefore imposed upon him, and that penance is laid upon him by his confessor according to the nature of his offense, and in proportion to the seriousness of that offense.

"At the same time, the Church, which is all-merciful, does not exact an eye for an eye, or a tooth for a tooth. Out of the infinite merits of Christ there is ample abundance for mercy. Consequently, the penance imposed upon the wrongdoer in the moral order is assuaged and lightened by virtue of the infinite satisfaction which Christ has rendered for all sins by His sufferings and death. The Church is, in the spirit of Christ, always most merciful. The penances imposed by the confessor are usually in the shape of almsgiving, fasting and prayer, and other means of satisfaction, as they may suggest themselves to the judgment of the confessor. In the early Church the penances were much heavier than are the penances required in our times. This mitigation arises from the growing spirit of mercy which obtains in the Church in these days.

"You will find this the case even in the civil order. Punishments are not as severe or as rigorous as they used to be. It was the universal custom in ages gone by to punish even minor crimes by the severest possible penalties. In England even an ordinary theft—petty larceny as we call it today—was punished by the severest of all penalties, death. If your man had stolen even fifty dollars two hundred years ago in

England, he would have been hanged for it. Nowadays a brief jail sentence would satisfy legal justice."

"I think that's a great mistake," said Skelton. "We are much too slack in exacting penalties. That is the reason there is so much crime nowadays, I believe."

"That may be, Skelton. I am not prepared to dispute it. I believe that penalties are too light nowadays and that we coddle criminals out of misplaced sentiment. That's one extreme. The other extreme is making the penalty unduly severe. Just now I am only pointing out to you that mercy is better than extreme rigor. To be merciful is a divine attribute:

> "The quality of mercy is not strained,
> It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
> Upon the place beneath. It is twice blessed:
> It blesseth him that gives and him that takes.

and 'To err is human, to forgive, divine.'

"In truth, it is only by the divine mercy that we are saved at all. Christ came out of mercy to man. The Church is the most merciful institution in the world, and she always deals with the sinner in the spirit of Christ, who said that He came to save sinners, not to condemn them. Christ instituted the tribunal of penance, giving it His authority for the purpose of saving sinners. If God were to exact an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, where would any of us stand? Where would I stand? Where would you stand? Suppose an untempered justice were exacted from us for our whole life?"

I looked at Skelton. He shifted his cigar to the other side of his mouth.

"Would you be ready to pay back item for item, eye for eye and tooth for tooth? I, frankly, wouldn't.

The man who takes that absolute view of justice, it seems to me, would very quickly fall into despair. You remember, in the Lord's Prayer, 'Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those that trespass against us,' and do you recall what our Lord said upon this very point—that we are not only to forgive seven times, but seventy times seven?

"Satisfaction—the penance imposed—is not an essential part, like contrition and amendment, of the Sacrament of Penance, because the primary effect, namely, the remission of sins, is obtained without satisfaction. When the words of absolution are pronounced, the forgiveness is given, but nevertheless satisfaction is a real or integral part of the Sacrament because it is necessary for obtaining the secondary effect of confession, that is, the remission of the temporal punishment due to sin, even after the eternal punishment has been remitted.

"Now, your man whom you wanted—in a rather vindictive spirit, I think—to see punished to the full, must have received a penalty imposed by the priest for his sin. That penance was no doubt sufficient in the eyes of God Almighty, who, after all, is the final judge in the tribunal, because the priest neither absolves nor imposes the penalty as a man. As a man he has no such authority, but as the representative of Christ, with the power of the keys, he has the divine authority. Surely, you cannot set yourself up as a better judge than God Almighty, or the priest in the confessional, to whom all the circumstances and conditions of the sin have been revealed. That man may have stolen from you under the pressure of circumstances of which you really know nothing, and all these things God takes into account. It is a difficult

thing for mere human beings like you and me to judge others. I think we may safely leave to God Almighty the determination of the degree of guilt of any sinner and the satisfaction due in the way of penalty."

Skelton chewed his cigar end for a few moments and then asked me abruptly, "What does a confession cost?"

I was not surprised, because I had heard it before and knew how tenaciously that calumny persisted in the non-Catholic mind.

"Not a penny," I answered.

"I always thought you paid the priest whenever you went to confession and that, the bigger your sin, the more you paid."

One feels like getting indignant whenever a calumny of this kind pops up, but these things happen so often that it would be a waste of salutary anger. To laugh such a situation off would be to spend one's good nature on barren soil, for Skelton was too matter-of-fact to feel the genial edge of humor. It takes a sensitive man to appreciate humor. I contemplated Skelton for a moment and said:

"If you stop a moment to think, Skelton, you will see how impossible a thing that is. You cannot sell or buy spiritual things. To attempt to buy absolution or the forgiveness of sins is to defeat the efficacy of absolution. Neither the purchaser nor the seller of the forgiveness of sins would accomplish his purpose. The priest who would sell absolution vitiates it at once by putting poison into the draught he is administering, and the penitent who would try to buy forgiveness cuts the very ground for absolution from under his feet: his confession is neither sincere nor

genuine. He is only putting more guilt upon his guilty soul. You may buy legal justice in the external forum of human affairs by bribing the judge or jury, but you cannot bribe or buy internal justice in the forum of conscience, where the secret disposition of the culprit is essential to the integrity of the process and where the omniscient eye of God sees everything. You can't think of spiritual things in terms of dollars and cents. There is no common measure between them. Your question about the cost of confession arises, first, from your confusion of the material world with the spiritual, and second, not only from your ignorance of things Catholic, but the heaped-up misinformation about the Church with which your mind has been crammed since the time of your childhood."

I could see Skelton begin to bristle at this indictment.

"Do you mean to say——" he began.

"Yes, I do mean to say exactly what's in your mind —that in regard to the Catholic Church you have been brought up on a lot of perverted notions of Catholic beliefs and practices. Let me enumerate a few. You think that Catholics are under the thumb of the Pope politically—that they vote, for instance, as the Pope commands. You think that the Catholic worship of the Blessed Virgin is on a parity with that paid to God. You think that Catholics are forbidden to read the Bible. You think that Catholics are kept in ignorance by the priests. You think that the Catholic Church is against education. You think that Catholics are idolators—that they worship images and statues—that Catholics are grossly superstitious. You thought (I hope you won't think so any more,

after our talk) that Catholics buy forgiveness of sins, that—but why enumerate more? None of these notions of yours about Catholics is true. Don't misunderstand me; I am not blaming you; I am only pointing out your state of mind in our regard. Is it not true that you do entertain of Catholics the notions that I have just enumerated?"

"Well, yes, I guess that I do," admitted Skelton. "I never knew any different until just now, and you will have to prove to me that I am wrong."

"Well, I have shown you that you were wrong about confession, and it would take more time than I have just now for the other points, for we are in the station."

"At any rate," said Skelton, as we were about to part, "I should like to know the name of the fellow that returned that money; I would make an example of him."

About a week afterwards I ran across an article in a newspaper, under a rather conspicuous headline, that Skelton was being sued for the recovery of fifty thousand dollars by a building concern, for the alleged substitution of defective materials in a building contract.

I thought of some words of Thomas à Kempis:

> In judging others a man usually toileth in vain. For the most part he is mistaken and he easily sinneth. But in judging and scrutinizing himself, he always laboreth with profit.

TREVIS AND RELIGION

My acquaintance with John Trevis in time ripened into friendship. It is a wonderful thing to have a friend in the full sense of the word. Shakespeare tells us to bind our friends with hoops of steel. Friendship is found in mutual affectionate esteem. A friend is a true and dispassionate lover, and friendship the grace of God. A friend is not only a well-wisher, a benevolent person, but a good doer. He aids us when we need aid; he pours his power into our weakness and guides us when the way is dark; he bears with us when the path is steep and difficult. He gives us himself when we most need it. I am speaking of a friend, not of a mere acquaintance.

I was drawn to John Trevis from the first. His great simplicity of soul was like a limpid pool where even the smallest pebble is visible on a clean and wholesome bottom. There was no mud there. His character was truly innocent, using the word in its deeper meaning—knowing no evil. He harbored no prejudice; that is, he had no fixed bias obstinately rooted in an opinion springing from pride or vanity. All this may seem extravagant, but it is easily accounted for; he was honest through and through in mind and heart.

He was a very intelligent man; not that he was in any way greatly endowed intellectually, but he saw clear and straight. His will never interfered with his judgment, nor his wishes with the truth, a rare faculty indeed. He had read a great deal, but without system. He had traveled a good deal, especially in

Europe, and possessed a fine admiration for good things.

He had a daughter (his wife, I gathered, had been dead many years) whose age, of course, I never inquired into; among females only the age of children is a legitimate subject of inquiry. But whatever may have been the years of Miss Trevis, and though there was just a little cloud of gray in her rich and abundant hair, and a certain settled maturity in her manner, she always appeared beautifully young. She was the kind of woman to whom Time could lay no claim. She was not what one might call a pretty woman, but her personality was so gracious, and it held such a distinctive charm, that homage went out to her instinctively. She was devoted to her father, and one could see that he was the chief solicitude of her life and her love. If she ever had had a romance—and for such a woman life must have held the cup of love to her lips—I imagine it was left untasted in a spirit of sacrifice for her father. At least this was the romance I wove about her, though I knew nothing about it at all. Her singular devotion to him was so supreme, and she of such rare charm, that I could imagine so great a love only out of a great sacrifice.

It was not long before I realized that I was a really welcome visitor at the Trevis house. I was urged to come oftener—for after all I was a busy man and my time much engaged—especially by Miss Trevis, who saw that her father liked to talk with me, and to please him was the object of her existence. If she had anything of selfishness about her, it was on his account. I did respond as often as I could, and enjoyed it, for I confess to a weakness to like to talk with intelligent and honest people. Some of my very frank friends

tell me that I like to hear myself talk, an indictment I am afraid I cannot altogether deny; but I can at least say in extenuation that I always like to hear myself talk intelligently, and may my tongue dry up at the roots when I indulge in foolish talk. By the way of retort I can say of some of my friends that they do not always talk wisely. This is the retort courteous, for I could have said I know some people who when they go beyond monosyllables usually talk nonsense.

So I went as often as I could to the Trevises, where we talked many things—books, travel, art—pretty much everything that people with a large and varied interest in life do talk.

Now religion was one of the subjects about which we frequently talked, for intelligent people who talk about pretty much everything cannot get away from the one thing in life which is most fundamental. People who studiously and painfully avoid religion as a subject of conversation are either moral cowards, or ignorant, or shallow bigots. They are like children who idly skim flat stones over the surface of a pond and ignore the fact that there are depths below into which their projectiles finally settle. Religion challenges life. To skim the surface and refuse to plumb the depths is to run away from the realities which may be defined as the ultimate verities. I can't see how intelligent people—for intelligence connotes looking into things. getting beneath appearances and probing to the essence—can be merely skimmers. The intellect (from *intus* and *legere,* to read or probe into) is given to man to see into things, and we cannot see into things unless we see them in their relation to other things, for there is nothing that is not bound in some way to all other

things. "You cannot stir a flower without the trembling of a star," says Francis Thompson, singing how the universe is intimately bound together even to the remotest reaches.

There is a tremendous unity in everything. That's what the universe means: all things held in a magnificent unity, star speaking to star, and deep unto deep. Even the flat missiles our skimmers ricochet idly over the surface would not skip along so entertainingly save under the propulsion of the same mighty forces that whirl the planets about the sun and wheel all the stellar systems through the spaces of the heavens. Man's intelligence is given to him to see and realize this correlation, to grasp this totality, and in grasping it to understand his own place in the cosmos. It was Kant, the German philosopher, who said that the contemplation of the starry heavens filled him with awe and veneration, not simply because the vista unfolded to his sight is vast and illimitable, but because it lifts the mind toward some sort of an apprehension of the infinite power of its maker. At such a moment the soul is filled with aspiration toward communion with God. Here is the kindling spark of religion.

When, then, intelligent people probe deep enough, they eventually come to the ultimate: they arrive at God, and that is to talk religion. All peoples bear witness to this necessity in human thinking, for there is no people now, nor ever was in the past, who have not conceived of some greater power other than and outside of themselves, however vague, imperfect or distorted that conception is or has been, from the fetish worshiper to the adorer of the God of Christianity. The fact that many of these notions of deity

are crude and rude, even in some instances cruel and debased, in no way militates against the substantial fact underlying its manifold varieties.

It is true that there are some persons at times here and there who profess to be atheistic or agnostic, but these are a few exceptions in the mass of humanity; and even these cannot deny that there is in the universe a greater power other and outside of themselves, although they refuse to express or formulate it, or try to put themselves in relation with it. No one can be starkly atheistical, for no one can look up at the vast canopy of the heavens, or stand in the awful presence of the mighty forces at work in the framework of nature, without realizing his own insignificance and impotence. That vaster and stronger and mightier power than himself he must recognize, and at the same time realize his own startling insufficiency.

He may deny that it may be understood, but he cannot deny that it is. He must admit that mankind has always conceived and formulated it in some way, however inadequate and incomplete, and he is forced to admit that the testimony of humanity as to the possibility of in some way expressing this other and greater power, and man's universal instinct to seek its expression outweighs the validity of his own petty refusal to conform with his fellow men, as the mass of the earth outweighs a single atom. His allegation that this other and greater power is absolutely inapprehensible to reason stands flatly and insignificantly over against the universally human declaration that it is apprehensible, and against the outstanding universal fact that man has always and everywhere put his conception into words, however far short of reality they may come, and has always sought communion with

that power in some way. That cannot be altogether unreasonable which always and everywhere conforms with human instinct and experience in all peoples, civilized and uncivilized. I conceive that our Agnostic hasn't much standing in court. His plea of ignorance (Agnosticism simply means "I don't know") has no validity against all humanity's "I do know."

The apprehension on the part of man of that greater power which humanity calls God, and his endeavor to enter into communion with God, is what is called religion, and is at the very root of human living, the sap and vigor of man's well-being.

The people who taboo religion as a subject of conversation are tabooing the most fundamental thing in human life and in human thought. I strongly suspect that the people who are afraid to talk religion are afraid to think religion. I surmise that this timidity about talking religion comes from a fatal confusion of what religion really is, or rather what a church is, for a church is the concrete and visible expression of religion.

Now, the people who shun the topic of religion think of a church as a sect, one of the numerous fragments into which Protestantism is divided, and a sect as an association growing out of the right of private interpretation which Martin Luther with fatal rashness introduced into the Christian world some four centuries ago, and which has been playing ducks and drakes with Protestantism ever since. At the back of their heads is the notion that to talk religion is to argue about sects, and to argue about sects is to attack the principle of the right of private interpretation, and that the right of private interpretation is sacrosanct, and to question it is to interfere with the freedom to believe

as one pleases; to believe as one pleases is to hold a religious opinion, and to controvert a religious opinion is to assault religious liberty itself; this is simply to stir up acrimonious debate and hard feelings and leads nowhere, for there is nothing a man holds to more pugnaciously than his own opinion. His own opinion is entrenched in personal pride, and here you touch the rawest nerve in a man's make-up.

I imagine this view has much to do with the avoidance of religious conversation coupled with a large lack of knowledge of doctrine and history. I am not blaming but merely trying to account for a situation obtaining in an age which is suffering acutely from the lack of religious enlightenment. Religion is not sectarianism, and the sect is not the Church. The only way to discuss religion rationally is to discuss religion and not sect, which is a fragment and incomplete. As religion is the relation between man and God, the lifting up of the heart and mind to God and communion with God as far as man is capable, we begin to discuss religion only when we consider the relation of man to God and what it implies. It is only by coming down to this fundamental idea that we even enter into the vestibule. To wrangle over sects and dispute over mere opinions is to beat the wind and divide the waters with a sword.

Much of what I have just been saying was the subject matter of some of my talks with John Trevis, but of course much more *in extenso* than is set down here. He never disputed, but did ask pertinent questions. There is a vast distinction between pertinent and impertinent questions which many people fail to understand. Pertinent questions are asked for the sake of eliciting enlightenment; impertinent ques-

tions are asked for the sake of dodging or beclouding the issue, or airing one's vanity.

It was always a pleasure to talk seriously with John Trevis; he was not only intelligent, but honest; he always wanted to know and never not to know. He opened his mind to your viewpoint and appreciated it even if he did not always agree. He was anxious to understand you, not misunderstand you. Intellectual honesty is a rare virtue. It requires not only an open but a courageous mind. "Convince a man against his will and he is of the same opinion still" is an old and popular saying, and holds a great truth by way of showing how apparent it is to even the vulgar mind how much the will has to do with determining a man's convictions. We are always so prone to believe what we want to believe and to hold out even against evidence, or if this seems too strong a way of putting it, against letting the evidence shine in upon the mind. There are a thousand and one gossamer veils of prejudice, bias, habit, desire, fear, pride, vanity and what not, which are so easily drawn across the proscenium of the mind—as in the theater many diaphanous curtains are drawn across the front of the stage until the scene is rendered misty or uncertain or even entirely obscured—that the truth is only half seen or utterly darkened and we have illusion instead of vision.

It is the part of the will to brush aside or tear away these impediments to clear seeing. This takes courage, for courage is an act of the will. A man may not want to know because he is afraid to know; there are consequences which he must face and accept, and this is not always an easy matter, especially where it is a question of religion. To root up old prejudices and

habits which are compounded of a thousand things accumulated through many years until they become a second nature is a laborious and painful task which few people possess the strength and resolution to undertake.

John Trevis had been brought up in complete ignorance of the Catholic Church. He was Southern born and reared in a Southern State where ignorance of Catholicity was not only as dense as Stygian night, but where prejudice against the Church filled the popular mind with encrusted layers thicker than the accumulated refuse of the Augean stables. His prejudice was the common prejudice which he found around him, as impersonal and as nebulous as the common notion of the Newtonian hypothesis of sideral origins or the Einstein theory of curved space. It was all taken as a matter of course and that ended it. Enquiry into its truth or falsity never entered the mind any more than did enquiry into the significance of the hieroglyphs of ancient Egypt.

It was only in after years when he had come to a maturer reason and had widened his knowledge by reading and contact with other people in other lands that he began to realize how purblind and narrow had been his vision. He learned that Catholics were not the benighted, ignorant and half-witted creatures of his early imagination, and that they were really human, with human sentiments and aspirations, and had a respect for the decencies of life very like his own. This much was the first result of his emancipation from the restricted and cramped environment of his boyhood and young manhood. Travel abroad in later years enlarged his horizon still more. In Europe he came to understand and appreciate the profound influence

of the Catholic Church in the making of Western civilization. The innumerable monuments of religion, the learning and art which had sprung up through her inspiration and under her guidance throughout all Europe, were a revelation which caused him profound astonishment.

All this served to broaden his point of view and slough away his ancient prejudice against the Church, but he had never envisaged the Church face to face. It was through the indirect facets of art and travel that he first gathered his favorable impression of the great religious institution which had been so completely hidden from his vision in his younger days. All this had helped him to a clearer and even a sympathetic view of Catholicism, and being a man of honest soul he admitted and deplored his past misunderstanding, but withal he had never seen the Church eye to eye. Her integrity and her essence were still invisible to him. He failed to see her as Christ perpetuated on earth, as Immanuel with us, the Divine Person incarnate, in whom she lives and moves and has her being and from whom all her energies flow, the source and culmination of all that she is or can be. It was not until he came to understand the supreme significance of the meaning of the Incarnation that the interior darkness of his mind was truly illumined.

TREVIS AND THE MASS

I dined one evening with Trevis, whose daughter had gone into town to visit a friend. It was always a delight to be in his house. His was a sympathetic soul, and I love sympathetic people, for sympathy is one half of understanding. I like intellectual people, but when intelligence is not warmed by sympathy it lacks heat. It may be a bright flame, but it is a cold flame; it may afford light, but it gives no warmth. I know some very intelligent people whose conversation is brilliant and entertaining, but I always feel when talking to them that I would like to wrap myself up in furs. On the other hand, I know some people who are not particularly intelligent, but who glow with such a ready sympathy that I feel with them as if I were sitting before a cheerful open fire, radiating geniality and good-fellowship. I have always found that people who possess a high degree of sympathy, though they may not be intellectual, are generally endowed with a large amount of understanding. They understand without the labor of what logicians call ratiocination, namely, arguing the matter out.

When you find both sympathy and intelligence in the same person, you may count yourself blessed of the gods. Mr. Trevis possessed both sympathy and intelligence. Consequently I always enjoyed his company immensely. It may be that my vanity had something to do with my partiality for Trevis, for he was a splendid listener, and evidently thought a good deal

of me, an attitude against which only the humility of a saint could stand proof.

During dinner we talked much about Europe, for Trevis never tired talking about his several trips to the Old World. Europe had been a tremendous discovery to him, and one which he had made comparatively late in life. Like most Americans who had never been abroad, he had a notion that everything worth while had begun in the United States. America was the most advanced and enlightened country on earth, while Europe was decadent and effete—except perhaps England. England was Anglo-Saxon with a Nordic root, a cozy hypothesis which has egregiously fitted into English insularity and found a sympathetic echo in America among those who fondly imagine that our melting pot really boils everything down to the pure Nordic strain.

Trevis was astounded to find Europe, especially Latin Europe, not a mess of ancient ruins filled with anemic populations and incompetence. His Nordic prejudice disappeared with his Nordic ignorance. Europe was an astounding and soul-invigorating revelation, and he began to realize that civilization had not suddenly sprouted from the rocky soil of New England, a legend concocted and carefully propagated from the sacred hub of Boston to the nation at large. The beauty, depth, grandeur and spirituality of the art of Continental Europe fairly took his breath away. The great cathedrals, especially the Gothic, filled him with awe and admiration.

"What manner of people," he said to me, "must they have been who built those wonderful and beautiful structures? What impressed me especially, Doctor, was their tremendous sincerity, their utter truth. They

were elaborate in wealth of ornament and detail. But there was never ornament or detail which was not in perfect keeping with the organic character of the building itself. Why, I have seen down in crypts and recesses, hidden away from the eye, as careful and sincere workmanship as in those more open parts that come directly and immediately in the line of vision!"

"That regard for perfected hidden detail," I said, "is very striking to us of this day and generation, who scamp our work and try to conceal its defects and weaknesses by false ornamentation. We must remember that the makers of the great medieval cathedrals built for the eye of God as well as of man. Then again, they were animated by a faith the depth and intensity of which we fail to appreciate, unless we see in some measure with their eyes. They believed with their whole heart, their whole soul, their whole mind in the actual incarnate presence of God in the tabernacle, the central point about which and for which the building was constructed. To appreciate the art of that period, especially its architecture, we must understand its soul, its soul focused in the mystery of God become Man and dwelling with us."

"Yes," said Trevis, "that ideal was in part borne in upon me after my second trip, and I began to absorb something of the spirit of what you call 'Ages of Faith.' Of course I can't grasp it as you Catholics do, and indeed, I envy you your stupendous ideal."

"Not stupendous ideal, but stupendous fact," I added. "It was not merely a wonderful ideal, but a living reality to the men who built the cathedrals. God in the flesh and dwelling among us was the very heart of their faith. Since the loss of the unity of the faith, which was the result of the unfortunate rebellion in

the sixteenth century known as the Reformation, belief has waned rapidly among the people who broke away, until to-day downright skepticism, as you see all around us, is rampant. Even Catholics who live amidst populations wholly or largely non-Catholic feel the chill of their environment. But the Ages of Faith burn clear, bright, fervently and passionately. How wonderful and practical that faith was you see in the unsurpassed monuments they left behind them."

Trevis nodded.

"I know what you mean," he said, "though I lack the great faith of which you speak. It could have been only a deeply rooted living faith that wrought so nobly and so abundantly. The world has never seen its like before or since. I feel how tepid and small is the faith of the world to-day. It has lost something tremendously precious."

"No, not lost it," I said, "but blind to it; it is still here. The Church is a city set on a hill, but if men refuse to lift their eyes up to it, and keep them fixed upon the things in the valley, they miss seeing it, not because it is not visible, but simply because they don't look. You have expressed your wonder and admiration of the works of the men whose faith built the great cathedrals of the Middle Ages. Without their tremendous faith in the startling fact of Christ with us, we never would have had the great cathedrals. That stupendous fact is the center and heart of medieval man's faith and his achievement.

"Modern man's faith has chilled and waned because he has not clung to that center. He does not grasp it as did medieval man, and indeed when we contemplate and analyze what the coming of Christ means to the world, and all that His incarnate presence in

the midst of His own creation implies, we well may be startled and overwhelmed, for it is the unique event in human history and has no explanation, save in itself. Catholics accept it as men do the sun in the heavens—as a matter of course. Were the sun to rise to-morrow for the first time, the peoples of the earth would prostrate themselves in awe and admiration at the dazzling glory of the stupendous scene. Yet every sunrise is only a repetition of the first sunrise, as splendid and as wonderful as when on the first dawn the glowing orb of day lifted its crimson disk above the horizon and dissipated the fleeting darkness of the night. The wonder of it is still there, only our susceptibilities are so blinded by its constant recurrence—for our faculties are weak—that we ignore and forget the beauty and majesty of this daily miracle. Repetition stales us, because we have not the eternal youth of God, which never grows satiate with perpetual beauty."

"Yes, yes," murmured Trevis, all intent upon my words.

"What I want to say is that even the children of the Faith grow so accustomed to the idea of God in the flesh and dwelling among us—the most startling and tremendous thing the world has ever known—that they look upon it as a matter of course, just as men in general take the sun in the heavens as a matter of course. You no doubt think—and I have heard non-Catholics say—that if you believed as we do you would adore on your knees in ecstatic admiration every moment of the day, and you are surprised to see how apparently unconcernedly, just as unconcernedly as men view the sun, we go about the affairs of life, as if we did not realize what that great transcendent fact

means. Our capacities are too slight to sustain the constant splendor of it, and the Divine Goodness has graciously tempered it to us by veiling its glories. The saint is he who realizes and lives in the Divine Love to a heroic degree. It was this that enabled St. Francis of Assisi to bear the very stigmata of the wounds of Christ; it was this that lifted St. Teresa to ecstatic contemplation, and indeed it was participation in the supreme love of Christ that made all those whom we call saints extraordinarily holy. They lived in Him and He in them.

"We ordinary mortals also share in that Divine Love, and in proportion as we imbibe it, so do we become more or less sanctified. And the fullness of it is denied none, though of the many called, few are chosen. It was this love of Christ incarnate that made the Ages of Faith what they were. In the unity of the Faith, there was what I would call a community love of Christ among men. It was in the inspiration of this love that they wrought so wonderfully and beautifully. There was not only intense individual devotion, but an equally intense communal devotion to Christ dwelling among men. You remarked upon the magnificence and beauty of the great cathedrals which the Ages of Faith so abundantly scattered over Europe. Well, the heart and source of these marvelous achievements was Christ in the Blessed Sacrament."

"What exactly do you mean by the Blessed Sacrament?" Trevis asked. "I have some vague notion of it, but I confess I have never heard any explanation that brought it precisely to my mind."

"I understand," I said. "The answer is very simple, and yet transcendently profound. In its simplicity it is the presence of Christ on our altars in the Eucharist,

that is, Our Divine Lord incarnate, under the appearances of bread and wine. The substance of bread and the substance of wine are converted into the body and blood of Christ by the words of consecration uttered by the priest in the Sacrifice of the Mass. This is a plain and simple statement, and is the whole matter in question, and is just as understandable in these simple words as in a thousand pages of explication, for it is not comprehensible at all by human reason. It is a matter of faith entirely, and rests utterly and solely and finally upon Christ's word, and the authority of His Church, which has held it from the beginning. It completely transcends any effort of man's reason; it is not within the compass of nature's laws; it is in the supernatural order, a mystery, as much over and above nature and the processes of nature as the Incarnation and the Trinity.

"Indeed, the three correlated mysteries of the Eucharist, the Incarnation and the Trinity constitute a wonderful triad which characterizes and marks off the Catholic religion essentially and transcendently from all other religions. Indeed, a religion that is not supernatural, and falls within the compass of human reason, is not a religion but a philosophical formula. A religion revealed and instituted by God must bear the mark of God; it must be supernatural. That God becomes man—the basis of the Catholic religion—is altogether beyond the reach of the human mind. It must be of divine conception and origin, supernatural in thought and in fact. The notion that this fundamental doctrine of the Catholic Faith is merely a reflex of the pagan legends of mythological divinities at times assuming human forms, is a complete misunderstanding of both the Catholic belief and the pagan

standing of both the Catholic belief and the pagan stories. The mythological divinities were never supposed to become incarnate. They merely assumed the shapes or appearances of men; they were simulacra. Christ is true man and true God. His human nature lifted up and united with His divinity in His divine person, the Word made flesh. I only mention this by the way to point out on what a ludicrously false basis is the attempt to discredit the Catholic doctrine by trying to bring it to the level of pagan folklore. Between the conception of true God become true man, and the mythological gods of heathendom masquerading in the guise of men, is the startling difference between heaven and earth, the difference between a creed of divine origin and the fantasies of the myth-making imagination of the people sitting in darkness."

"I see," commented Trevis, "although I confess that I did vaguely entertain the confused notion you have just relegated to its proper place. It is a notion current among writers on comparative religion. It has obtained considerable vogue, for I have met it in popular writing where it is often taken as a matter of course."

"Yes, I know," I answered. "It is an easy habit of popular writers to assume as a matter of course anything that appears scientific. It gives them prestige among readers who are as ignorant as they are. Comparative religion is often only comparative blundering, where critics predisposedly hostile to the Church search for deadly parallels which don't exist. They take superficial resemblances for essential facts, as in the instance I have just cited, when they would trace the Catholic doctrine of the Incarnation to pagan sources in mythological legends. They understand

neither the doctrine nor the legends. If they could undermine the doctrine of the Incarnation by dissipating it into pagan folklore, they would destroy the foundation stone of the Catholic religion. If Christ be not veritable God become veritable Man, Christianity is only the refuse of pagan mythology. So much for comparative nonsense, wherein the comparisons usually consist of artificially bracketed incomparables.

"But to go back to the point from which I have momentarily digressed. The Incarnation is the central doctrine of the Catholic Faith. You may say that you don't understand it. I answer, 'To be sure, you don't understand it, for if you understood it, it would not be what it is, the one event in human history which transcends history, and which remade history when man most needed remaking.' For the old world was dying, and Christ came to bring new life, new life beyond the power of pagan man, a supernatural life, a miraculous life, which was to save what was good in the old and create a new civilization. Strange and startling as that event was, it perpetuated something which is equally strange and startling. Christ instituted the Sacrament of the Eucharist, and in this sacrament gave His body and blood for the food of mankind to the end of time. This too is as incomprehensible as God becoming Man. It is not measurable by the human mind, and like the Incarnation transcends the natural order. It is, in fact, the Incarnation perpetuated.

"At the Last Supper, on the eve of His death, Christ took bread and wine into His hands, and converted them into His body and blood, and gave His disciples to eat thereof, and bade them do this in commemoration of Him. He had previously admonished those

around Him that unless they ate of His flesh and drank of His blood, they should not have life in them. Some turned from Him, declaring that this was a hard saying. He did not explain to them and let them go. There was no explanation. He meant what He said literally. They refused faith in the word of God Himself, and then went their way, a stiff-necked generation.

"This Eucharistic act, the conversion of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, and the offering up of Christ constantly as an unbloody sacrifice, thereby repeating the bloody sacrifice of Calvary, the Catholic Church has perpetuated at the command of Christ, has perpetuated by His power ever since. It is the central act of Catholic worship, its heart, its source, its inspiration, the soul of all its activities, the beginning and end of all it does, around which and by which and for which it energizes and functions unto the salvation of souls. This central act, with the prayers and ceremonies that enshrine it, and which are solely directed to it, is what we call the Mass, the Sacrifice of Calvary repeated in an unbloody manner with Christ Himself as priest and victim, for the celebrant of the Mass officiates only as Christ's delegate and representative, and, vested with Christ's power and authority, consecrates the sacred elements.

"Christ became man for the salvation of souls, and the God-man still abides with us for the salvation of souls. The Catholic Church is Christ with us. It is the perpetual adoration and worship of Christ as He appointed the way to us. It is for Him, in Him and by Him. Everything it does is for His honor and glory. All merit is of Him and by Him and for Him. He is the root, the sap, the flower and the fruit. The

saints are only reflexes of His merit and His glory. Any homage given to them is rendered to them inasmuch as they are only the rays of His holiness, as the light of the moon is the reflection of the splendor of the sun. Holy and beautiful as is His mother, beyond all saints, her holiness and her beauty are the reflex of His holiness and His beauty. This is the Catholic belief; this is the Catholic practice.

"It was this living belief and its practice in the Ages of Faith that built the great cathedrals and wrought itself in the supremest art of the world. The center and the heart of these great structures, as indeed of every Catholic church, is the tabernacle where Christ abides in the Blessed Sacrament."

"What an astonishing misconception of the Mass the non-Catholic world has," remarked Trevis. "I read over the Mass prayers a number of times, as you once suggested, and found them the most unique and sublime service imaginable. I admire it immensely and feel its majesty and its beauty, and wish I had the faith to believe it as you do, but the whole conception is so overwhelming—I would almost say terrifying—to think that God, infinite and eternal, should condescend to veil Himself in the Host, and confide Himself to the care of His own creatures, that my mind staggers and reels at the bare thought. It is really too tremendous for human understanding."

Trevis spoke very earnestly and seemed much moved. Here was a soul that wanted to believe and was fearful. He was like a man on the verge of an abyss from which he shrinks back afraid, and yet is eager to plunge over. He had more than once manifested to me this readiness and reluctance to believe. I never urged him. He would accept of his own accord

when the light had clarified fully in his own mind and his will had yielded generously to grace. He would then say, as did Peter: "To whom else, O Lord, shall we go, for thou hast the words of eternal life." It was this that was passing through my mind as he was speaking. I took up his last words.

"Oh, yes, it is indeed too much for human understanding, for God alone understands it. Do you remember the Epistle in the Mass, just following the Collect: 'Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are His judgments, and how unsearchable His ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been His counselor? Or who has first given to Him and recompense shall be made him?'

"Here is the Church lifting her voice to apprise us of the ineffable mystery to which she is leading us. Here we are, as it were, still in the vestibule. You have no doubt noted how the Church in the Mass prayers leads us by degrees to the great mystery. Her supplications, her petitions, her praises, her thanksgiving, her adorations rise in crescendo, a mighty diapason, to the act of consecration, when the priest speaks the words, the words of Christ Himself, by whose supernal virtue the transubstantiation of bread and wine into His own body and blood is effected: 'For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been His counselor?'

"The Mass is God's institution, not man's. That is why it so transcends our understanding. It is God's thought, not ours. It is God's act, not ours. He alone can comprehend it, for He alone could think it. We know it as a fact by faith, and faith alone. What we can understand is this: that the omnipotent God who

made Heaven and earth can just as easily convert the substance of bread and wine into His body and blood as in the beginning He called into being from nothing the universe of creatures we see around us. We have His divine word for the truth of what we believe, and our faith springs from His word and is nourished by it, and our faith is reasonable, because it is God who speaks."

"It all then rests on the word of God," said Trevis, speaking to himself rather than to me. I nodded, but said nothing, thinking it better to let him pursue his own reflections. After a pause he went on: "It's all very wonderful; in its final resolution it is simply the word of God."

"Who can neither deceive, nor be deceived," I added. "That's the beginning and end of Catholic faith. Our Act of Faith is: 'I firmly believe, O my God, all the truths the Catholic Church believes and teaches, because thou hast revealed them, who canst neither deceive nor be deceived.' That's the immutable and indubitable foundation of all, beyond which not the loftiest intellect can go, and which the simplest may understand, the reason for the faith that is in us, God Incarnate in Christ, and Christ ever with us in the Blessed Sacrament. This is the faith that built the great cathedrals, which the man of the Ages of Faith believed with his whole heart, his whole mind and his whole soul. The tabernacle, the home of Christ among men, is the heart of these magnificent edifices. The inspiration of their glory, their beauty, their majesty, their splendor is the tabernacle. All the rest is but the expansion of His cloistered presence there. The Mass is the supreme rite of His institution, by virtue of which He remains with us in the Blessed

Sacrament. Around that rite centers and clusters all the Church's liturgical function. All focuses in it; all radiates from it. Here is the granary of the miraculous food of His body and blood which nourishes us unto eternal life. 'Unless ye eat of my flesh and drink of my blood, ye shall not have eternal life in you,' He one day declared to His followers. Only God could have said that. Only God could have conceived it. Only God can accomplish it. And God who said it alone fulfils what He then promised, and the Sacrifice of the Mass is that fulfilment. God alone could provide and perform this stupendous miracle of love for man. Nor the mind of man can conceive, nor the imagination of man imagine, the height and the depth of this tremendous mystery of God's love for man, wherein we partake of Him. When the priest pours wine and water in the chalice we pray with the Church: 'O God . . . grant that by the mystery of this water and wine we may be made partakers of His divine nature, who vouchsafed to become partaker of our human nature, namely, Jesus Christ, Our Lord, Thy Son.'

"The Blessed Eucharist is indeed the Alpha and Omega of Catholic faith. It is beyond words to tell. Christian art burgeons from its beauty and its sublimity. The painting, sculpture, architecture, mosaic, stained-glass window, poetry, music, song and liturgies of the Catholic world flower like golden branches from that divine stem. All sanctities and virtues spring from it. If you and I understood it, Trevis, in one-ten-millionth of its sublimity, we would be lifted to the Heaven of Heavens. If we could even so much as submerge ourselves for the minutest fraction of a moment beneath the surface of that infinite sea of divine con-

descension, we would be drowned in love. If the flame of its ardor touched us a single instant with all its gracious warmth, our souls would expand in ecstasy to the glowing regions of the great mystics whom He took to His divine embrace. But God tempers His beauty and His love to our human frailties, and under the veils of the tabernacle abides in our midst."

Trevis was silent, and I too fell into his mood. As I was leaving that evening Trevis said to me:

"Doctor, what you told me this evening about the Mass has focused everything to one point. I think I am beginning to realize, as I never did before, what the Catholic Church means. It is a matter truly above all argument. To argue about it to chatter vain things in the presence of the Holy of Holies. I feel like one who has been groping in the twilight. Now I see the sun beginning to lift above the horizon."

MOTHER'S DAY AND THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

"Mother's Day is a wonderful thing, don't you think so, Doctor? It makes one think of his mother, and I am sure there is nothing better that a man could think of."

My interlocutor was a neighbor, Fletcher by name, who did business in our town and was not a fellow commuter. He went into the city only on special occasions, and it happened that this was one of the occasions, and I was seated alongside of him on the 8:30. Fletcher was head of the Mother's Day Society in our town and an earnest advocate of its celebration.

"Come to our meeting this evening," he went on. "I promise you a fine entertainment, and, by the bye, won't you give us a little talk on the subject? I am sure the Society would appreciate anything that you might say."

I pleaded a prior engagement that evening, but thanked him for the courtesy of the invitation.

"I am sorry you can't be with us," he said. "You know I am an enthusiast about Mother's Day. I was one of the first to agitate for its observance. It has become a nationwide institution now. To treasure and revere the memory of one's mother helps a man mightily along the rough road of life. Motherhood is the greatest thing in the world. Many a time the thought of my mother—she was as noble a woman as ever lived—has helped me over difficult places,

and saved me from making an ass of myself. I just think of what she would think of me, and that makes me stop short when otherwise I might smear myself all over in the muck."

"That's an admirable sentiment, Fletcher. I entirely agree with you. Reverence for womanhood and motherhood is a strong motive for a man's self-respect when he is in danger of slipping up. By the bye, there is a fine passage in Tennyson's *Princess* which puts what you have just said in a very beautiful way. Have you ever read the poem?"

"I can't say as I have," answered Fletcher half apologetically. "I am not much of a bookman. Have to read so much nowadays, newspapers and other current stuff, that I don't find much time for any other kind of reading."

I nodded my understanding of a busy man's predicament in these piping days of hurry and bustle. Literature is more or less a thing of leisure, and leisure has taken wings in the hurly-burly of modern life.

"Here are the lines. I think you will like them. The hero of the poem is speaking of his mother, who has instilled into him a noble ideal:

> "Happy he
> With such a mother! Faith in womankind
> Beats with his blood, and trust in all things high
> Comes easy to him, and tho' he trip and fall,
> He shall not blind his soul with clay."

"By George, but that's fine!" enthusiastically exclaimed Fletcher. "Let me put those lines down. I'll use them to-night at our meeting." And Fletcher jotted them down as I repeated them.

"Great, great!" he went on. "Just the thing! It's

too bad you can't be with us to-night, Doctor. I believe it will help the citizenship of this country mightily to awaken our people to a high appreciation of what womanhood and motherhood mean, and the Lord knows we need some inspiration of this sort with the loose ways we see all around us these days."

I confess I was a bit surprised at Fletcher's enthusiasm. I had known him only as the ordinary humdrum citizen who went about his affairs in the most matter-of-fact way, but here was an unsuspected streak of idealism where one would least expect to find it, a vein of gold below the surface and generally hidden to the naked eye. And indeed I have discovered as life's experiences accumulate with the passing of the years that in most people there is a latent vein of gold which does not crop out visibly. We hear of the gold now and then in some tale of heroism in the newspapers, or meet with it at some turn of the road in people whom we would ordinarily pass by as of little or no consequence. After all, why shouldn't we discover gold in human nature, for are not all made in the image of God, and to be of the divine likeness is an immense dignity. This passed through my mind as Fletcher sat talking to me, and it came to me that perhaps here was an opportunity to put in a word about Catholic reverence for motherhood and its significance, of which I felt confident he knew little or nothing.

"You know, Fletcher, that the Catholic Church inculcates in a special way a high regard for womanhood and motherhood. It is one of her chief devotions."

Fletcher turned to me in some surprise. There was an inquisitive suspicion in his eyes. It is strange how

non-Catholics take alarm when the Catholic Church is introduced into a conversation. It is stranger still how they can live in the same community with Catholics and remain as completely ignorant of the doctrines and practices of the Church as if it were some sort of a secret cabalistic cult. I sometimes wonder if this is not due, on the part of Catholics, to the false notion that they might offend their neighbors by speaking out frankly, or else to the fact that they seek to avoid the acrimonies of a religious dispute; and on the part of Protestants that they keep the barriers of their prejudices forever standing between themselves and their Catholic neighbors, who, after all, are fellow human beings and with whom a franker intercourse would clear away many groundless misunderstandings and uncharitable bugaboos.

As soon as I mentioned the Catholic Church I sensed in Fletcher a certain hardening of manner. He lost the genial camaraderie with which he had been talking to me about Mother's Day.

"You see, Fletcher, I am naturally sympathetic with your Mother's Day idea, because I am a Catholic. I have the profoundest reverence and veneration for the greatest mother that the world has ever known"—again Fletcher manifested a certain uneasiness—"for the mother of God. We have several days which we especially dedicate to her. One of these days we celebrated only yesterday, the eighth of December. We call it the Feast of the Immaculate Conception."

Fletcher stared at me inquiringly.

"Did you ever read," I went on, "Wordsworth's wonderful sonnet upon the Immaculate Mother? He speaks of her as 'our tainted nature's solitary boast.' That is one of the most notable tributes—and Words-

worth was not a Catholic—to the Immaculate Mother in all the range of human literature. Your ardent advocacy of Mother's Day convinces me of your own lofty ideal of motherhood in general. As you say, there is nothing so sacred, so tender, so satisfying in the human heart as the love of one's mother. You see, we are truly our mother for the first nine months of our lives, flesh of her flesh, blood of her blood. Her life is inseparably our life; her heart is the beat of our heart, and from her being our being is builded up and nourished until the moment of birth, and then in her travail and pain we come into the world. No human relation could be nearer or more intimate, and after we come into the world it is from her breast that we receive the food of infancy. It is her care that guards us from all harm during the period of our utmost helplessness. It is she that guides our feeble and tottering footsteps when we first venture fearfully to walk. It is her dear solicitude that hovers over us during childhood; her teaching that forms our budding minds, instructs our innocence, and instills into us the principles of truth and goodness which form us for the battle of life. She has poured herself into us body and soul, and her wonderful love follows us through all the vicissitudes and trials of life. No wonder we think so much of our mothers, for true motherhood means the complete surrender of womanhood to the child. I think we may truly and gratefully say, blessed be our mothers. I believe that you will say Amen to that."

"I certainly do," declared Fletcher, "but what has that got to do with——"

"Yes, I anticipate what you were about to say. What has that got to do with the quotation from

Wordsworth? A great deal. You see, the Catholic veneration for the mother of God has its human roots. All revere good mothers, and the greater the mother the greater the reverence. I take it that the highest, holiest motherhood possible is that of the mother of the Divine Son. You of course believe that Christ was divine, that He was God?"

I wasn't so sure whether Fletcher did believe this or not, for I find that the majority of non-Catholics whom I meet are either not sound upon the most fundamental truth of Christianity, or else entertain such a vague and hazy notion about it that their orthodoxy upon this point is as wabbly as a ship at sea. But Fletcher affirmed that he did believe in the divinity of Christ.

"Very good," I said. "Since you believe that Christ is true God and at the same time true man, you must realize the unique and sacrosanct dignity of His mother's maternity. He derived His humanity from her, was flesh of her flesh, and blood of her blood, just as much as you and I are the flesh and blood of our mothers. That human nature which He took from her He assumed into His own divine person in closest union, so that in Him man became God and God became man, and in His person the divine and human nature subsist. As the man Christ is God, and God is the man Christ, rightfully Christ's mother is called the mother of God."

I began to feel that I was asking a little more of Fletcher's theological knowledge than it could bear. He did not altogether follow me.

"All I mean to say, Fletcher, is in brief that the mother of Christ is the mother of God simply because the man Christ is true God."

"Yes, I understand that," said Fletcher.

"I suppose then you will agree with me that she is the greatest and supremest mother in all the world, and when Christ chose her to be His mother He bestowed upon her the greatest honor and dignity that the Creator could bestow upon His creature. We call her the Blessed Mother. Perhaps you remember, as the Gospel narrates, how the angel who came to announce to her that she was to be the mother of Christ saluted her: 'Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee, and blessed art thou among women'; and perhaps you remember her own words, poured forth in that exaltation of her unique sanctity when she was carrying her God within her holy womb on the occasion of her visit to her cousin Elizabeth: 'Henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.' The angel of the annunciation had saluted her as blessed among women, and she, lifted up by the holiness of His presence and under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, prophesied her supreme distinction as blessed to all the generations to come. That is why we Catholics call her the Blessed Virgin. The ancient Jewish prophecies which were directed to the coming of the Messiah predicted her in the words of Isaias: 'Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son.' You see there is ample warrant from the Bible for calling her the Blessed Virgin and for venerating her with an exceptional veneration as the mother of God. If motherhood, as you say, is a wonderful and beautiful state, what must we think of her exalted motherhood beyond all the daughters of men?

"You know how mothers love their children. What then must have been the depth of her love for her Divine Child, and in turn His love for His mother. It is beyond our conception to grasp and our imagination

to picture. Do you recall from the Gospel of St. John how Christ, looking down from the Cross at His sorrowing mother standing there with the beloved disciple, said to her: 'Woman, behold thy Son, and after that He saith to the disciple: behold thy mother. And from that hour the disciple took her to his own.' In the person of the beloved disciple He gave her to be the mother of all of us. The Church treasures and cherishes these memorable words of the dying Son, and all Catholics address her as Mother Immaculate, the Blessed Virgin, Mother of God."

Fletcher said nothing. He really had nothing to say, for he could gainsay nothing I had said.

"From this," I continued, "you can see how great is our devotion, how exceptional is our veneration for her whose place in the scheme of redemption is so exceptional, for it must be remembered that she voluntarily concurred in and shared her Son's divine will to the salvation of the world. When the angel announced to her the eternal designs of the high prerogative of being the mother of God, she was at first perplexed, not understanding how her virginity and her maternity could be reconciled, and when assured that it would be—not in the order of nature but by the power of the Holy Ghost—she assented and submitted her will to the most high in her sublime humility, saying: 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord. Be it done to me according to Thy word'; and in her words upon the visit to her cousin Elizabeth: 'Because He hath regarded the humility of His handmaid.' You see why we venerate her above all other creatures, because He had regard for her above all other creatures as His eternally chosen mother."

"Yes, but don't you Catholics rather exaggerate your

worship of the Virgin?" declared Fletcher. "Don't you put her on a parity with Christ Himself? What is it called? I forget the word."

"I suppose you mean Mariolatry, as you term it out of sheer misunderstanding of the true doctrine. I notice that you use the word worship, and by that you no doubt limit the term in your mind to the supreme worship due Almighty God. First of all, let me say that worship is not necessarily restricted to this absolute meaning. Worship, which is derived from the old Anglo-Saxon word *Weorthscipe,* means simply honor in the sense of worth, with the termination *scipe,* meaning cult or devotion. We pay supreme and absolute honor to God alone. We pay a relative honor to the saints, a subordinate and dependent honor, which is simply a reflex of God's holiness. We also pay a relative and special honor to Christ's mother, also subordinate to His and dependent upon her relation to Him, an honor greater than that of any other creature because of her specially exalted and unique position, but as distinct in kind and degree from His honor as the creature is from the Creator. No, Mariolatry is simply a distortion of the true Catholic doctrine."

"I never heard that explanation before," said Fletcher.

"Naturally," I said, "because you never took the trouble to find out. Now that you know the truth I should think, Fletcher, that it would rather appeal to you, with your high ideal of motherhood."

"It does seem wonderful as you have explained," answered Fletcher, "but I don't quite get it all yet. I'd have to think it over. I never dreamed that you Catholics looked on it that way."

"I would like to call your attention to another thing in this connection," I said. "You remember the line I quoted from Wordworth's sonnet, 'our tainted nature's solitary boast.' This line is compact with the great Catholic doctrine about the Blessed Mother. The poet avers that the Blessed Mother alone of all the children of men was exempt from the stain of Original Sin, 'our tainted nature,' which all inherit from Adam. I suppose that you believe in Original Sin."

I asked him this because there is such a picking and choosing nowadays in doctrine among Protestants that it is difficult to know where a non-Catholic stands and what he believes or doesn't believe.

"What I am getting at," I continued, "is the singular privilege and grace of the mother of Christ to have been preserved exempt from all stain of Original Sin in the first instant of her conception, namely, that moment when her soul was infused into her body, so that she never fell under the dominion of evil. This unique privilege she is granted in view of the merits of Jesus Christ the Savior of the human race. As she was to be conceived supernaturally of the Holy Ghost in the generation of her divine Son, it was fitting that not even the shadow of the taint of sin should have ever been in the holy house whose fruit was to be Jesus Christ the Son of God. Sin was not removed from her soul as it is from others, by baptism. It was excluded; it was never in her soul. She was the sinless virgin who conceived and brought forth the sinless Son. She was immaculately conceived and sanctified in the first instant of her existence. This is the Catholic doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. It was this that Wordsworth sang: 'Our tainted nature's solitary boast,' the one exception among men from the

taint of the corrupt nature which Adam bequeathed to us."

"Well, I never knew before that that was the meaning of the Immaculate Conception," said Fletcher in unfeigned astonishment. "I am surprised. I always thought that your doctrine of the Immaculate Conception referred to the conception of Christ."

"That is a very common error, Fletcher. In connection with it there is another grievous error, and that is the misconception of the Virgin Birth. The Virgin Birth means the birth of Christ from a virgin, and does not refer to the birth of Mary, the mother of Christ, as is erroneously supposed by non-Catholics."

"I see," said Fletcher. "I was wrong about that too. It does not seem strange, now that you have explained it, that people should so confound the two."

"Not so strange, after all," I answered. "Just take your own case. Why were you in error about these two Catholic doctrines?"

"I can't exactly say why. I just didn't know."

"Pardon me, Fletcher, but you didn't know because you took for granted what wasn't true. Isn't that so?"

"I guess you're right," answered Fletcher.

"And you didn't bother about finding out just because you thought these beliefs were some sort of Popish superstition or invention, and therefore corruptions of the pure gospel."

"I'm afraid that there is a good deal in what you say," answered Fletcher, "though to be perfectly frank I think it was because I didn't think one way or the other about the question. I was really indifferent because I wasn't interested. The fact is we don't discuss doctrines much in my church nowadays. We've got away from that sort of thing."

"Yes, I know, and I'm not going to raise the question here. But I do want to point out that it is only fair that you should inform yourself as to what your neighbor believes before you attribute to him something that he doesn't believe; don't think that his belief is superstitious or unfounded without first inquiring as to what it really is. You thought that Catholics were guilty of Mariolatry, and put a creature on a parity with the Creator in their veneration of the Blessed Virgin. You know differently now. What is more, I am sure that you who are so enthusiastic about Mother's Day can also sympathize with our devotion to her who is the greatest of all mothers, the one human being with whom the Son of God was as intimate and as close as you and I were with our mothers. Think of the depths of the maternal love of that mother and that Son, for Christ was man with human affections just as you and I. And more than you and I, how much greater, stronger, purer and higher must have been His love than ours, with all our faults, failings and blemishes. While He was the most virile man that ever lived, He was also the tenderest and gentlest. What solicitude He had for the lame, the halt, the blind, the sick, and all who were in any way afflicted! During the years of His public ministry he was constantly healing and consoling the afflicted out of the infinite compassion of His heart. None ever asked Him but received. Even in the midst of His own terrible agony on the Cross He remembered the penitent thief and promised him paradise that very day. He was indeed the Man of Sorrows, for no sorrow was like unto His sorrow, and He was the man of compassion, for no compassion was like unto His compassion. He did not forget His blessed mother in the anguish of that last

hour, and He also remembered us when He bequeathed her to us as the Mother of Consolation.

"It was as He hung on that bloody gibbet of shame, like a common malefactor in the eyes of the world, that the sword prophesied by Simon, at the presentation of the Infant Jesus in the Temple, pierced His mother's heart. As she was the Mother of Sorrow, so was she to be the Mother of Consolation to the generations who were ever after to call her blessed."

"It is all very wonderful and beautiful, Doctor, I confess, and is entirely new to me. I am surprised to learn that you Catholics seem to be so well acquainted with the gospel."

"Well, that's another misconception on the part of non-Catholics. The fact is that Catholics are fed the year round on the gospel. Every Mass said, and Mass is said every day, contains some part of the Gospels and the Epistles. On Sunday some part of the gospel is read to the people, and a sermon on the gospel of the day preached to them. Indeed, the life of Our Lord is constantly rehearsed to them in this way as well as in other ways. The devotion called the Rosary is a meditation on His life and Passion. In truth, Christ is the heart of our faith, its life, its heat, its power, the source of its growth and its sustenance. But to come back to the subject which your remark interrupted, the second chapter of St. John's Gospel tells us the story of the Wedding Feast in Cana of Galilee. I suppose you recall it."

Fletcher nodded.

"Now, that is a very significant incident in the life of our Lord. Not that the incident is so momentous in itself. One might almost ask why the Evangelist records it at all? But it is tremendously significant

because it is the record of Christ's first miracle, and because that miracle was wrought at the request of His mother, and stood apart from His public ministry. You remember that the wine gave out at the wedding feast. You can picture the embarrassment and mortification of the hosts if they had discovered the shortage. I say, if *they* had discovered it. For the gospel does not say the wedding hosts were aware of it. It would seem from the evangelist's words that it was the mother of Jesus who first noticed it, and Our Lady in the kindness of her heart wanted to save her hosts from the embarrassment of ever knowing it. 'And the wine failing, the mother of Jesus saith to Him: They have no wine.' Her eyes must have said more than her words. 'O Thou, my beloved Son, my God and my all, who hath regard for Thy handmaid, and hath done great things for me, do this for me, that the wine fail not.' I believe it was in some such way and by silent understanding rather than by speech that the mother asked the Son. And then came the Son's answer in words: 'Woman, what is that to Me and thee? My hour is not yet come.' Some commentators have thought that Christ's reply to His mother was a sort of rebuke, but so far from that, it seems to me to bring out with tremendous emphasis the supreme significance of the situation. The Son fully understood what was in the mother's heart. 'You, my mother, ask me to work a miracle before my appointed hour. You, who know, as no other one does, you who in the secret counsels of your heart understand so well the reason of my coming and the great work I have been sent to do, why should the lack of wine here, a small thing after all, concern either me, whose hour has not yet come when I am to manifest myself before men as the

Messiah, or concern you, who alone shares the knowledge of my mission? But you are my mother. Be it as you wish.' This is, it seems to me, what must have passed between mother and Son as she gazed into His eyes. It was the unspoken utterance of soul to soul. 'His mother saith to the waiters: Whatsoever He shall say to you, do ye.' Note the quiet confidence of the mother in her Son. She knew from the first that He would comply with her wish, for was He not her Son? There is nothing in all the Gospels that brings out in stronger and higher relief that most intimate relationship between the Divine Son and the Blessed Mother. How great and profound her influence with Him, when at her simple wish He forestalls His appointed hour and works a public miracle! With what sublime simplicity the Evangelist tells the story. They have no wine, said the mother to the Son, and forthwith He put forth His creative power, even though it be not His hour, and makes wine where there was no wine, simply because she wanted it.

"It seems to me that the Evangelist records the story of the wedding feast, which had no relation whatsoever to Christ's public ministry, simply to show the great influence of the mother of Jesus with her Son. His reply to His mother's request brings that point out with startling force, for in spite of the circumstance, He immediately works the miracle; and I may remark that it is the same Evangelist who tells us of that touching scene at the supreme moment of the tragedy of Calvary when the Son bequeathed His mother to the world."

Fletcher was silent for a moment. I could see that he was affected.

"I am sure, Fletcher, that you will now understand

the great and singular devotion of the Catholic Church to the Mother of God, our Mother in Christ."

"It is, indeed, something to make one think," said Fletcher.

I read the next morning in the local paper of John Fletcher's eloquent address at the Mother's Day Club's meeting the night before. A good part of it was quoted, and I thought I caught in it some echo of our talk. At any rate the lines from Tennyson were quoted in full with the comment that they were vigorously applauded by the audience. My sarcastic friend, Jackson, told me that he had been present and that fully half of the audience were old maids.

FUNDAMENTALISM, MODERNISM AND THE BIBLE

This time I was speeding west on a fast train, so this is not the usual commuter's adventure. It is rather a traveler's tale told by a commuter who chanced to be making a longer journey than his daily jaunt to and from the city. My train was as comfortable and luxurious as those limited chariots of steel, designated flying expresses, could be made. Nevertheless, any journey over a few hours becomes tedious to one who has traveled much and who is not going for the pleasure or novelty of the trip.

Under such conditions travelers usually occupy themselves by reading, sleeping or talking, all of which modes of consuming time are perfectly human. But there is one type of traveler one sees who does none of these things. He or she simply sits in vacuity with a "cipher face of rounded foolishness." If it were not for the cipher face, one might imagine such a person to be given over to meditation, but the blank countenance and the vacant eye belie this charitable supposition. Now this is what I call an inhuman way of passing the time. Indeed, it seems to me a purely animal attitude, the inane posture of an overfed cat with tucked-in claws by the kitchen stove, or the inert lumpishness of a sluggish sloth pendant from a dead branch in a silent jungle.

I have seen "humans" sit by the hour in a railroad train in this most inhuman apathy. If they would only

go to sleep or drowse I could understand, but to sit awake by the hour and evidently think nothing, feel nothing, imagine nothing, and do nothing is like being plunged into a nameless void which to a rational living creature ought to be next door to Hell.

Now, it so happened that I had read my eyes tired with the jolting of the train. I tried to sleep, but the constant lurching, along with the upright position in a chair, kept joggling me awake. The back of my neighbor's seat in front stared blankly at me, and my neighbor behind was snoring. Besides, we were all strangers and had never so much as addressed a word to each other. Estrangement between fellow passengers in a Pullman parlor car seems to be a rigid etiquette scrupulously observed except in the smoking compartment.

To the smoking compartment, therefore, I hied myself, rather than sit idly ruminating. I found it occupied by two gentlemen, so absorbed in their own conversation that they did not even glance at me as I entered. I sat down on the seat opposite and lit my cigar, and, perforce, listened to them, for their voices were raised in a somewhat hectic argument. In a few moments I caught the drift and learned that they were discussing the Bible. I soon discovered that one, a somewhat lank individual with prominent eyebrows, who looked about fifty, was holding strenuously to the literal interpretation of the Bible down to every comma; the other, a younger man by perhaps ten years, and of much fuller habit, indeed approaching to corpulence, was maintaining—though with less vehemence and emphasis in his manner than his antagonist—that the Bible was to be taken figuratively in most of its parts, which I soon ascertained

he held to be those parts in any literal sense at variance with science and modern enlightenment.

I had stumbled upon a set-to between a Fundamentalist and Modernist. It was a happy find in a dreary prospect, when travel was becoming stale, flat and unprofitable. The incident lifted tedium into interest. I had read considerable about the clash between Fundamentalists and Modernists in the Protestant world, but this was the first time I met it in a real live scrap between two flesh-and-blood champions. My interest was aroused. Here were two ordinary men, what is usually called the man-in-the-street type, joining issue in the smoker of a Pullman car on the most acute and far-reaching question in the Protestant world. Neither, it was evident, was a biblical expert, and neither, it seemed, had much theological information. As I didn't know their names I shall call the Fundamentalist Smith, and the Modernist Jones. How they got into the argument, I did not know. But there they were in it, each convinced of the rectitude of his own side, and each much in earnest, the Fundamentalist almost angrily so.

"Then you don't believe the Bible is God's book," declared Smith, following up a rather confused statement of Jones about the inspiration of the sacred Scriptures. "You are not a Christian, sir!"

There was considerable asperity in Smith's voice. His tone was almost anathema maranatha.

"Yes, I am, but an enlightened Christian," answered Jones, "and I do believe the Bible is God's book, but not in the sense in which you do. It's the greatest book that the world possesses, the best wisdom of humanity. I call it a divine book, because in its pages man has manifested the highest aspiration of the

human soul, and breathed out his noblest thought. It is God in us speaking out."

"You said that before," testily interrupted Smith. "But your saying so does not make it so, and is a denial of the Christian belief. I say it is not God in us speaking out, as you put it, but God outside of us speaking to us. It is God's work and God's law, and we must accept it just as He has given it, as the foundation and rule of Christian belief. You would make it out a mere man-made book, and not really divine at all. By divine I mean coming from God and not from man. What you call divine is only the best thought that human nature is capable of, but with that restricted use of the word you might as well call Shakespeare divine."

"So I do," responded Jones. "Only I hold that the Bible is the noblest, vastest and profoundest wisdom of humanity accumulated through many generations, though there is much in it that we have outgrown."

"Then, between Shakespeare and the Bible the difference is only one of degree?" queried Smith.

"If you want to put it that way, why, yes," and Jones shrugged his shoulders.

"That is a squarely anti-Christian view," declared Smith, "and anyone who holds it is emphatically not a Christian."

"I believe I am as good a Christian as you are, only I take a broader view of Christianity than you do," asserted Jones. "It seems to me that you are rather dogmatic in reading me out of the Church in this arbitrary way. We've passed far beyond that medieval view. This is an age of science and enlightenment."

"But don't you see that you are flatly against the

Bible when you talk that way? The Bible is the rule, the measure of what is true or not true. Man is not its measure, but it is the measure of man."

"As you please," answered Jones, with some complaisance in his manner. "But I think the experience of the human race is more than the book."

"Then you believe that man's word is more than God's word," Smith rather excitedly retorted. "That attitude, I assert, is anti-Christian."

"Rather," and Jones smiled superiorly, "let us say that man's highest wisdom is God's word, and God's word is man's highest wisdom. You and I really agree, Smith, only we have a different way of putting the same thing."

"Not at all," protested Smith, "we don't agree in the least. We are in radical disagreement. You simply juggle over the difference with words. I refuse to have any part in your statement. You are nothing more than an infidel, an unbeliever, sir."

"You talk like a Romanist," snapped back Jones acrimoniously.

Now I had sat listening to all of this with considerable relish. It was a novel experience to me. The two debaters had taken no more notice of me than if I had not been there at all. At this last sally of Jones I chuckled aloud, for I saw that it had stung Smith to the quick. To be accused of being anything like a Romanist was adding insult to injury. Smith flushed up with outraged dignity. It was too much for him.

"I decline to talk with you any more, sir," he declared stiffly.

But my chuckle had drawn attention to my presence. Both looked up at me enquiringly and somewhat askance.

"I beg pardon," I said. "I meant no offense, but I couldn't help overhearing your little debate, and that last remark made me smile audibly, as it were. You see, I happen to be what this gentleman characterizes as the last degree of religious pariahism, a Romanist."

Both men stared at me. They were evidently taken aback.

"But don't mind me," I went on. "I was interested in your dispute. The question you are debating is most acute among the Protestant churches. I would like to see how you are going to settle it."

"Settle it!" exclaimed Smith. "The only way to settle it is to accept the Bible as God's word and the Rule of Faith. That's sound Protestantism, and the man who denies it isn't a Protestant Christian."

"I agree with you," I said. "I mean that I agree with you that the acceptance of the Bible as the sole Rule of Faith is sound Protestantism, the original Protestantism of the Reformation."

Smith turned to Jones with a gesture of triumph. "You see, this gentleman agrees with me. I am right."

Jones turned to Smith with a sarcastic smile. "Far from it," he said. "His agreement with you proves that I am right when I said that you talked like a Romanist."

"Just a moment, if you please," I interrupted. "You are both right and you are both wrong. Mr. Smith here is right when he declares that Protestantism is the acceptance of the Bible as the Rule of Faith, but he is wrong when he avers that the Bible is the sole rule of the Christian Faith. And you, Mr. Jones, are right when you assert—for this is what your position comes to—that the meaning of the Bible is not made

evident by the sacred Book itself. It requires an interpreter that can explain its sense; but you are wrong when you assert that that interpreter is fallible man, however scientific and enlightened he may seem."

"Who, then, is the interpreter?" asked Jones, with the air of one who has asked a question that admits of no solution save his own.

"Allow me, first," I answered, "a word or two to clear away some possible misapprehension before I come to that. The Bible in many of its parts is difficult to understand. I suppose you will admit that."

Jones assented readily, declaring that at times the Bible was not understandable at all, and sometimes patently in error. Smith on the other hand averred that it presented no difficulty to the sincere seeker after truth who opened his mind to the Holy Spirit.

"I take it, gentlemen," I said, "that you are both sincere seekers after the truth and are willing to embrace the truth when you see it." Both answered that they were and that they were perfectly open to the light.

"If that be the case," I continued, "then your thinking, Mr. Smith, has a radical flaw in it, for your friend, Mr. Jones, gets out of the Bible just the opposite of what you do. He says that it is evidently not the word of God, and you hold that it is. There is little use in your discussing what this or that part may mean if you both are diametrically opposed as to its meaning as a whole. You are at opposite poles of thought, and it is clear that the Holy Spirit has not enlightened you both, for the Holy Spirit cannot be guilty of a contradiction. It seems to me that the notion that the private illumination of every reader of the Bible doesn't work. I have just heard

you, hammer and tongs at each other, practically demonstrating this point."

"I mean," hastily injected Smith, "that to anybody who really accepts the Bible as the word of God, the Holy Spirit will give him light to understand it. If he rejects it as the word of God he cannot expect the Holy Spirit to enlighten him."

"Why not, if he really wants to know the truth?" I asked.

"But the fact that he rejects the Bible as God's word," answered Smith, "shows that he doesn't want to know the truth."

"Hold on, there," exclaimed Jones. "That's an impertinent and arrogant assumption on your part. I do want to know the truth as much as you do, and as sincerely, and I do find a great deal of truth in the Bible, but I also find a great deal of error, and that is just the reason I don't believe it to be the revealed word of God."

Smith bristled with dissent. God's word is God's word and no man has a right to deny it. Jones rebutted with an equally positive assertion that it was not God's word.

I intervened.

"A moment, if you please. Nothing can come of assertion and counter-assertion. First of all, let's hold to the immediate point in hand. You hold, Mr. Smith, that the Bible is a self-illuminating book. All one has to do is to read it with an open mind and its meaning is apparent to the seeker. Mr. Jones, here, reads it and discovers that it is not what you say it is, the very word of God. Now as the reading of it conveys two entirely different meanings as to its essential character, one to you and another to Mr. Jones, it is clearly not

a self-illuminating book. It requires an interpreter to say what it is. That's my point."

"Who, then, is the interpreter?" both chimed together.

"Why, naturally the divinely appointed interpreter," I answered. "The Church of God established by Christ Himself. The Bible plainly doesn't interpret itself, and as you two gentlemen witness in your differences, its reading doesn't give you understanding, for each of you takes from it a directly opposite meaning."

Jones looked at Smith and Smith looked at Jones.

"It seems to me," I went on, "that it is obvious that an interpreter is needed. As God is its author, and has given us the Bible for our religious instruction as an aid to salvation, He must have provided in His wisdom some method by which we may understand it correctly, for plainly it is difficult. He could not have given it to us as a bone of contention to squabble over and to set us at loggerheads. That would defeat His purpose in giving it to us. Mr. Smith's idea that every reader draws out the right meaning for himself by merely perusing it with an open mind is dispelled by the existence of innumerable sects which have established themselves upon the contradictory meanings they have drawn from Holy Writ. That the Scriptures are not to be privately interpreted is evident from the disastrous results of private interpretation.

"Even in our mundane affairs we guard against anybody and everybody interpreting important human documents according to their own lights. Take the Constitution of the United States, for instance. If any or every citizen could construe that instrument after his own fashion, we would have utter confusion. We provide a special tribunal, the Supreme Court,

to decide with ultimate authority what the Constitution in whole or in part means. We do the same thing for our Federal, State and Municipal laws. Why, then, should we subject the word of God to the bedlam of private construction? But even before this question there is one more fundamental still to settle. What is the Bible? Which are the inspired writings? Who is to determine this for us?"

Smith gasped at this, and Jones smiled a bit—a bit sardonically, I thought.

"Why, that was settled a long time ago," declared Smith, after he had got over the first surprise at my asking the question.

"Who settled it?" I asked. "For you must remember there were a number of writings which professed to have been written either by biblical personages or by men in intimate relation with them, both of Jewish and Christian origin. But let us limit ourselves to those writings dealing with the life of Christ and His teachings. We have as the canon of the New Testament the four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, various Epistles of the Apostles, and the Apocalypse of St. John. Who selected these out of a number of other writings, such as for instance the Infancy Gospel of James, the Gospel of Gamaliel, the Pseudo Gospel of St. Matthew, the Pseudo Gospel of St. John, the Gospel according to the Hebrews, the Gospel according to the Egyptians, and other compositions which are outside of the canon of authentic Scriptures, as we have received them? Who declared this or that to be the genuinely inspired word of God, and who rejected this or that as not? Who stamped some writings with the seal of assured authority, and repudiated all others as spurious?"

"The Christian Church, of course," affirmed Smith, emphatically.

I couldn't help smiling, and Jones laughed outright.

"Why, Mr. Smith," I said, "just a moment ago you declared that the Bible was its own witness to its authority, and anyone reading it would receive the illumination of the Holy Spirit as to its meaning. Now you say the Christian Church is its witness. In other words it is the Church that vouches for it and not the Bible itself."

Smith was visibly upset over his own admission.

"Let me have a word," intervened Jones. "You were right," addressing me, "in your contention that the Bible does not carry its own conviction as to its authority. As I see it, it is full of errors and fables, but I think I see a way of clearing up Smith's difficulty. The general consensus of human appreciation of the Bible as the world's greatest and noblest book, the highest moral teaching of the race, gives it its unique position in mankind's esteem in spite of its many errors. It is the human consciousness of its great merit that sets it apart and stamps it as the Book of Books."

Smith shook his head dubiously. That kind of rescue was not altogether to his liking.

"Pardon me, Mr. Jones," I said, "but your way out is quite beside the question. We are talking about the inspiration of the Bible, whether it is God's word, not whether it is the most admirable piece of literature we possess. You are bringing it down to a purely human level. Mr. Smith, here, holds—and so do I—that the Bible is an inspired book, and has God for its author. Homer, Shakespeare, Dante are universally held to be supreme works of literature, but the general

high regard in which mankind holds them does not rank them as inspired in any divine sense. The Bible is what it is because it is the inspired word of God and for that reason outranks all human literature."

Smith nodded vigorous assent. "That settles you, Jones," he crowed.

"Not at all," declared Jones. "I grant you that if the Bible is the directly inspired word of God, what this gentleman says about it is correct. It must have a witness to vouch for it and a living interpreter, but my point is that it is not divinely inspired. If it were, it would not be so full of obvious errors."

"For instance?" I asked.

"Why, the very first chapter of Genesis says that God made the heavens and the earth in six days. Now that's plainly absurd in the light of modern geology, which demonstrates that the earth was millions of years in forming."

"Aside from the accuracy and certainty of the geological record," I answered, "are you sure that the Bible says that the world was created in six *days?*"

"It certainly does," affirmed Jones. "It expressly says that God made the world in a series of six days."

"It is true," I said "that the translation you no doubt read—I take it that you did not read the Hebrew original—does use the word *'day'* to express the stages of creation, but the word *'day'* does not necessarily mean the twenty-four hours by which we designate that lapse of time. If you had read the original Hebrew, you would have found the term used, not *'day,'* in the sense of twenty-four hours, but an indefinite period. Some theologians, following St. Augustine, say that the six days signify only a logical (not a real) succession, that is, the order in which the creative

works were manifested to the angelic intelligences. But this aside, the word 'day' is often used in English outside of its usual diurnal significance. We speak of, for instance, the 'heyday of the Roman Empire,' or referring to the stretch of time of a man's life, 'in his day,' or we use the term in conjunction with an indefinite term to express an unlimited time, as when we say 'forever and a day.' So you see Genesis is not in obvious error when it says that God created the heavens and the earth in six *days*. All of which goes to show that the Bible is not to be criticized rashly out of our ignorance."

"Well, what about that passage in the Bible," inquired Jones, "where we are told that Joshua commanded the sun to stand still. Surely that was impossible."

"Why impossible?" I asked.

"Because it is against the order of nature," Jones answered.

"What is the order of nature?" I asked again.

"Why, the immutable laws under which nature operates," answered Jones.

"I suppose you mean," I answered, "the order which the Creator imposed upon His own creation to carry out His purpose."

"Put it that way if you like," said Jones.

"Very well. If God imposed the order of nature," I went on, "can't He suspend that order for His purpose? If He possesses the infinite power to make the world out of nothing, hasn't He the infinite power to control it?"

"Yes. But in the case of the sun standing still," insisted Jones, "wouldn't that throw the whole universe out of gear? If the sun stood still, then wouldn't

all the planets and all the stars and all the sidereal systems, for we know that they are all dependently interrelated in their motions, be thrown into confusion?"

"Why so?" I asked. "If they are all dependently interrelated in their motions, wouldn't the stopping of the motion of one stop them all? Just as, for instance, if I were to thrust a pin into any one of the wheels of my watch here, wouldn't all the works stop, and when I withdrew the pin wouldn't all the works start again and go on as before? Or couldn't the Creator in His omnipotence stop them all simultaneously?"

"That's all very well," answered Jones, "but aren't you making the universe just a sort of toy in God's hands? Aren't you detracting from the dignity and majesty of nature by assuming that God would or can interfere with its operations?"

"Aren't you," I retorted, "detracting from the majesty, wisdom and freedom of God by denying that He has power over the works of His own creation? Aren't you making the world a Frankenstein monster that gets out of hand and thwarts the plan of its maker? In short, aren't you making the creature more powerful than the creator, the temporal greater than the eternal, the finite more than the infinite, matter more than mind? The fact is you are arguing from a purely materialistic position. You are really eliminating God from the universe altogether."

"That's right," declared Smith with emphatic approval. "Your position, Jones, is absurd. If you accept God at all, you must accept His omnipotence."

"You used an expression a moment ago, Mr. Jones," I went on, "not in the least warranted by what I have said. Your inference is this: that God's interference—that was your word—with the motion of the world

reduced it to a toy, a mechanical plaything. On the contrary, the fact that God can suspend the natural operations of the universe, and did in the instance of the sun's standing still at Joshua's command with the divine permission, goes to show that the universe is more than a bit of mere mechanism. It connotes a higher order than what is called the natural order. The purpose of my watch is not that its wheels simply go around, but that it should keep time, of which the watch itself has no knowledge, but is the end designed by its maker. In other words, the watch means and implies more than the watch itself; so the world means and implies more than the world itself. The final end of the world is not the world itself, but God. There is a threefold order in the world; the natural order, divine providence, and the supernatural order. By divine providence is meant God Himself considered in that act by which in His wisdom He so orders all events within the universe that the end for which it is created may be realized. He so disposes, directs and concurs with everything in the natural order that the whole universe, in all its operations throughout time and space, converges to the ultimate end outside of time and space for which He designed it. The purpose of the world in the natural order under divine providence is the manifestation of the glory of God in space and time to rational creatures. But over and above the natural order there is a supernatural order which concerns itself with, and is made manifest to, the rational creature called man by a supernatural revelation. This is the region of religion. The Jewish dispensation was of that supernatural order as is the Christian dispensation, completing and superseding the Jewish revelation. The coming of Christ was super-

natural, as is the Church He instituted. The universe is encompassed and permeated by the supernatural. Indeed, the natural order is only finally explicable with the background of the supernatural."

To all this Smith assented heartily. Jones still held out against what I had said, but could only reassert what he had alleged before. He believed in God, but his God was simply human consciousness welling up into its highest expression in humanity. I believe, however, that in his secret mind he was not quite as cocksure as he had been at first. A man-made God is a sorry makeshift. Yet it is the logical outcome of Modernism, which makes God the vagary of its own mind.

"I see that you agree with me," said Smith, greatly pleased to find in me an ally against Jones' Modernistic deity.

"I do agree with you in part, Mr. Smith, but by no means altogether. I believe with you that the Bible is the inspired word of God and in no sense the product of human consciousness. I disagree with you utterly that the sacred Scriptures are to be left to private interpretation, that they are self-illuminating to any reader. That is evident in the fact that you take one meaning out of them, and I another."

"But, after all," urged Smith, "don't we agree substantially? Our differences are only minor."

"Surely that is not a minor difference between us when you claim that the Bible is the sole Rule of Faith and I hold that the Church is the Rule of Faith and the divinely appointed interpreter of the Bible. I accept the Bible and its meaning on the authority of the Church. Your rule has resulted in confusion and dissension. Mine has kept the faith in unity and integ-

rity. I believe that Christ instituted a living, infallible and authoritative society perpetuated throughout the centuries to teach us what He taught. That I think is a vital difference."

"But, after all, we both believe in Christ," insisted Smith.

"Yes, but I believe in Christ more than you do. I believe not only that He came to save us, but I believe in the way which He laid down for our going. He instituted sacraments, outward and visible signs of grace which nourish and sustain our spiritual life. Among these is the sacrament of the Eucharist, the greatest of all the sacraments. You reject it altogether, and the texts of the New Testament which bring it out most clearly you twist into a figurative sense, notwithstanding the fact that you are a staunch upholder of the literal meaning of the Bible. When you read these texts, does the Holy Spirit infuse in your mind a figurative meaning, and when I read them does the Holy Spirit infuse in my mind a literal meaning? Here is a radical contradiction of which the Holy Spirit, the spirit of all truth, could not be guilty. It is obvious that we do not believe the same things of Christ. I believe that Christ founded an infallible Church to teach all generations to come His doctrines in all their fullness and their implications with as much certainty as Himself taught them. You don't believe this and you are really at bottom just as badly off as Mr. Jones when you come down to the basis of your belief, for it rests upon as purely a human foundation as his theory of human consciousness as the source and measure of divine truth. Your theory of private interpretation subjects Holy Writ to the vagaries of anybody and everybody. You may

feel that your personal interpretation satisfies you, but you cannot morally impose it on Mr. Jones, or on me, for you have no authoritative commission to teach religion. If you shift the onus of interpretation to the religious body to which you belong—and I do not know how united upon the meaning of the Bible among yourselves you may be—you are in an even worse dilemma. First of all, you are throwing over your theory of the right of private interpretation when you make your Church the interpreter. Now, either your Church infallibly interprets or it does not. If you claim that it infallibly interprets, you are assuming a position which goes clean against your Protestantism. That's my position; an infallible Church to interpret the Bible. If your Church does not interpret infallibly, you are uncertain of the truth and are forced back upon the theory of private interpretation, which doesn't hold water ten seconds in the face of the innumerable contradictions which have resulted from its application to the Bible."

"Well, then, what's your position, precisely," asked Smith, querulously.

"I thought I had made it plain to you, but I will state it again. I believe the Bible is God's inspired word, not because it is the profoundest, wisest and greatest book ever written, as Mr. Jones puts it, but because the Catholic Church vouches for it. Mr. Jones has put the cart before the horse. The Bible is the wisest, most profound and greatest of books because it is the word of God, not because it is the finest product of human consciousness. It is a book hard to understand in many ways, and needs an expounder who can say with certitude what its meaning is. St. Peter in his second Epistle, which is a part of the

Bible, warns the faithful against the dangers of misinterpretation. Speaking of the Epistles of St. Paul, he declares that in them 'are certain things hard to understand which the unlearned and the unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.' Who, then, is to tell us what these things hard to understand mean? That teaching body divinely instituted by Christ, which He promised should not fail. It was that teaching body, His Church, that gave us the Bible. What is the true Bible, and what is not, the Catholic Church determines, sifting by her divine authority the genuinely inspired writings from those that are not. Christ instituted His Church to teach what is true and what is not, and it is just as much her office to determine what is true in the written word as in the spoken word. There were a lot of writings in apostolic times and after apostolic times which purported to be Scripture. What was definitively the complete and clear-cut canon of Scripture, that is, the genuinely inspired writings, was not finally fixed until the latter half of the fourth century. I accept them because the Church says so. I am on sure ground. You are not when you presume to say what is Scripture and what is not, and when you wrest it to your fallible and human interpretation."

Jones laughed, rising from his seat. "You got your dose that time, Smith. You haven't a leg to stand on. Either take it all or leave it all. That's the logic of it. As for me, I refuse to be slavishly bound down by Church or Bible. You are really in the same boat with me, Smith, for you too are after all believing what you please, though you don't seem to know it. Good-by, I am getting off at the next station."

As Jones departed, Smith fairly snorted after him. "He is nothing but an infidel. I stick to the Bible, at any rate. I'm getting off here too." And Smith in his turn disappeared behind the curtain which screened off the smoking compartment from the corridor.

I smiled to myself. I felt that it had been a pleasant and satisfactory adventure.

GILDER AND THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS

Three hours late, three hours from our home station, with a raging blizzard outside, and our train stalled! In front of us and behind, train after train in the same plight. A commuter's life is not a happy one! We were forty-five minutes late in starting from the city. After the first five miles we crept along foot by foot with constant stops, and after the first half hour came to a dead standstill. It was long past the dinner hour, and everybody was visibly hungry. Impatience stood out, metaphorically, like the fretful quills of a porcupine on the commuting countenance wherever one looked. Silliman, our standing grouch, had vented audibly his spleen against the railroad, the weather, and the universe in general, to now sympathetic ears. It was the first time he had ever found a majority with him. But even he had exhausted his bitter mood and scorching vocabulary, and finally slouched back on his seat in oozing gloom and scowling silence.

Here we were, prisoners in a day-coach, with no relief in prospect, for the railroad seemed utterly paralyzed. Like my fellow prisoners, I had been cherishing the hope for the past half hour of our train moving on, if not rapidly, at least moving, and of reaching our destination in the course of time. But minute piled on minute in accumulating delay, and still we stood, buried deeper and deeper under the wrath of the unabating blizzard outside. Several daring spirits had abandoned the train, with the purpose of finding their

way out by climbing the long incline that stretched upward on our right-hand side to a thoroughfare at the top, where electric lights could be seen gleaming fitfully through the dervish-like swirl of the blankets of snow.

I had been vacillating between the tantalizing hope of the train moving on and the resolution to brave the adventure of plowing up the hill after the hardy example of my several fellow commuters who had disappeared in the white storm outside. Another fifteen minutes' wait, and, screwing up my courage to the sticking point, I put on my overcoat, turned up the collar, slouched down my hat over my eyes, and plunged. It was a laborious climb, a foot of snow on the level, and heavy drifts every ten yards, blinded eyes and scant breath, for the agile days of youth are long past. Several times my resolution almost crumbled, and I thought of turning back, but I hated to give up and admit to myself that my years were too much for my pluck. So I fought on, although in the back of my head I was confessing to myself that there was no fool like an old fool.

At last, spent and winded, I reached the top and the electric lights. My heart was thumping and I was gasping. On the corner opposite the red and blue lights of a drugstore shone cloudily through the swirling snow. I paused for a moment to recover from the acute fag of my strenuous efforts, and then pushed across the street. It was with an immense sense of relief that I found myself inside and felt the genial warmth of a heated interior, for the wind had been keen, and I was chilled in spite of the heavy exertion of my climb. There was only one person in the room—a stocky man of about fifty years, so I judged—who,

like myself, had recently come in out of the boisterous weather outside, for his overcoat was wet and gleaming from the partially melted snow on it.

"A tough night to be out," he saluted me. "Did you come from the stalled train below?"

"I did," I answered, "and if I had known the strenuous job before me in getting here, I would have thankfully remained. It was more than I had bargained for. I am fairly played out. A man of my age should have had more sense."

"Not so bad as that, I hope," he answered smiling. "It was heavy plodding, though. I came through from the train myself only a moment ago. I have ordered a little stimulant. Won't you join me?"

"Gratefully," I answered.

"Grant!" he called to the druggist, whom I heard back of the partition busy over the preparation. "Make that two, and a stiff one. Here's a gentleman who needs some strong medicine. He's tuckered out from climbing up from the stalled train below."

The fact was I was shaky and weak, and the "stiff one" was badly needed. Mr. Gilder, for that was his name, afterwards told me that I was white as a sheet, and when he saw me come in the door he was alarmed. I looked to him, he said, like a man on his last legs, and indeed I was, for I could not have gone another ten yards. The "stiff one" put me back on my feet in defiance of Volstead's law.

"Where are you bound?" asked Gilder. I named my destination.

"You can't get there to-night," he said; "that's out of the question. The trolley has quit running, and no motor, even if you could get one, could plow through these drifts. I live only a block beyond here, and if

you will accept my hospitality, I will be only too glad to put you up for the night."

There was no gainsaying him, and I realized my serious plight. The upshot was that, after telephoning my family and apprising them of the situation, I spent the night under this Good Samaritan's roof.

In an alcove of the library, where my host and myself sat talking and enjoying our after-dinner smoke, hung the portrait of a young man dressed in military uniform. An American flag was draped across the top and along both sides. The base of the picture rested on the shelf of the mantelpiece. On each side of the portrait stood a vase filled with fresh flowers, and in front burned an oil lamp with a floating wick, such as one sees before shrines in Catholic churches. The young soldier of the portrait bore a strong resemblance to my host, and I surmised that it was his son, and that the son was dead. I could not help taking notice of the singular circumstances, especially of the oil lamp burning in front of the picture. My host sensed my interest.

"That is my son, an only child," he said. "He was killed in action at Soissons. He is the nearest and dearest possession of my life. His mother died when he was quite young. He was twenty-four when the war came. I am proud of him and have no regrets."

All of this was said quite simply.

"I see," I said. "I think I understand."

"I speak of him as if he were not dead, and indeed, I do not think of him as dead. That's the reason I have the little lamp before his portrait, the symbol that he still lives, and that I shall be with him again."

I felt my eyes moisten. Here was a man living on a memory, very precious to him and very real.

"When I am in this room I feel that he is very near to me in spirit," he added. I looked up at him and began to wonder if this was not a bit of the post-war spiritism in which so many bereaved people were indulging as a groping consolation for their loss.

"No, not that," he went on, interpreting my unspoken inquiry. "I have no sympathy with that sort of thing. It seems to me a foolish and sinister impertinence, a flouting of God's providence."

Again I looked my surprise.

"My son died a Catholic, and I am glad of it, though I am not a Catholic myself. He died in the arms of the chaplain of his regiment, a Catholic priest who was afterwards killed. It was from a letter of Father Flatley—that was his name—that I learned this. It was a beautiful letter, and is very precious to me. His was a priestly soul, I could see that from his letter, and he a very human gentleman. He told me all about Regie—that's my boy's name—and what he said makes me feel very proud of my boy and thankful that I am his father. My boy was of a happy and sunny nature, and what is rarely found in young people, kindly and thoughtful of others. He enjoyed life, as is natural to young people, whose zest for a good time sometimes makes them thoughtless of others. But not so with Regie. He was always mindful of me. If he was delayed or out late, he never failed to telephone me. He knew I might be anxious. He was my only chick, you know." And here there was just a little catch in Gilder's voice. "Well, Father Flatley wrote me he was like a ray of sunshine among his comrades, cheerful, jolly, full of fun, the life of his company, more than willing to help, eager for any undertaking, whatever the risk or the fatigue. Let me read you a passage

from Father Flatley's letter," and Gilder drew from his inside pocket a leather case from which he took the letter.

"Here is what he says about my boy:

> He was clean of heart and mind, as few are in these loathsome surroundings, for practical war is more than often not only physically but morally dirt and stench and rottenness. He never complained; he never became downhearted or sullen or bitter, as many do—and who can reproach them under the pestilential conditions which they have to endure? But Regie—I always called him so, for he had greatly endeared himself to me—took all things not merely light-heartedly, but happily, and I may even say heroically. He was a rare soul. I am a priest, and in my priestly experience have come to know many souls, but never have I known a soul, it seems to me, in which the grace of God, which is the friendship of God, shone more luminously than in Regie's. His was a naturally Christian soul, and we know that 'He enlighteneth every one that cometh into the world.'
>
> Regie often came to me to talk things over. I mean that he often came to me to talk about religion. Formally, he knew little about the Catholic Faith, but I never knew a more apt disposition to the Faith. I hope and I believe that you will take in good part—and I am sure of it from what Regie has told me about his father and how hungrily and lovingly he always spoke of you—what I am now about to tell you, for it was a step that gave supreme joy to him; he asked me to receive him into the Church. He had seen

his Catholic comrades attend Mass and receive Holy Communion. He told me that he often had a longing, a sort of urging, to join with them; it seemed so wonderful and beautiful to be united with God Himself. This, after I had explained to him the meaning of the Blessed Sacrament. I did receive him into the Catholic Church, baptizing him conditionally, as he did not know whether he had ever been baptized. I shall never forget his face the day I gave him his first Holy Communion. It was illumined with an ecstatic joy, and it seemed to me that a veritable light shone out from it. Indeed, Mr. Gilder, I think that your boy was a saint."

Gilder paused here in his reading, and, looking up, said: "Now you will understand why I burn the oil lamp before my boy's picture. But let me go on with Father Flatley's letter:

I am writing you this because Regie asked me. I believe he had a premonition that he would be killed. 'Write Dad all about it,' he said to me, 'for you know, Father Flatley, that some of us are certain never to come back'; and he said it with one of those wonderful smiles of his, and I felt at the time he understood that he was one of those who would never come back.

I am happy to say that I was with him at the last moment. We had gone over the top into No-Man's-Land. I always make it a point to be with my boys. Well, we were caught in a withering fire. The enemy had laid down a sudden barrage and we were in the midst of it. It is a terrible and heart-rending thing, Mr. Gilder, to

see one's boys—for they are all my boys whether in my fold or not—smashed and torn by brutal shrapnel. We dug in, those of us who had not been consumed in that first blast, as best we could. The screech of shells and the stunning crash of explosions—just imagine a thousand thunderbolts not in the heavens above but on earth alongside of you—confused and confounded us. It seemed as if our bodies were being torn apart and our minds crushed under the fearful impact. In a moment like that there is nothing to do but to hug the ground in a spasm of dread.

Presently the barrage lifted and passed on. I looked up. Other heads were also lifted, and those who were still unscathed began to stand up, and many—alas, how many—lay very still and quiet. I began to search—how often have I done it—among those prostrate forms for any who might show signs of life. The first two bodies I turned over were quite dead. The third was Regie's. He was still breathing, but stertorously, and his lips were stained with blood. Bear with me, dear Mr. Gilder, I do not want to distress you, but I believe in the event you will want to know. I lifted Regie in my arms, and pressed my flask to his lips. He sighed a bit, and his eyelids fluttered, and presently his eyes opened, glazed and dull at first, and then the light of recognition dawned in them. 'Father,' he said, and then that dear smile of his came into his face, 'tell Dad,' his utterance came brokenly, 'I am happy,' and his life blood gushed from his lips. I made the sign of the Cross over him and breathed the words of absolution. I believe, O mortal father, that your

> boy passed from my arms into the arms of his Immortal Father. Forgive me, if my words seem to hurt you, and your tears come, as mine do as I write them, for I too had learned to love him. But with due allowance for that human affection which is wisely a part of our mortal compound, our tears should rather be tears of joy that you, his father in the flesh, and I his father in the spirit, should have had such a son, and given him unstained and beautiful, over to the safer keeping of his heavenly Father, whose love enfolds him in that eternal beatitude, for which he was born into the world.

"Isn't that a beautiful letter? And haven't I reason to be proud of my dear son? And why should I have any regrets?"

I was quite choked up with emotion. I confess to being a sentimental fellow, and indeed what would life be without sentiment? People who have no sentiment are walking around in their bones, for they are without flesh and blood. Gilder was smiling while my eyes were blurred with tears. He had so often read Father Flatley's letter that he had absorbed its exalted mood and was lifted up to its spiritual height. Here was human affection purified and transfigured into joy. I blew my nose vigorously and wiped off my glasses, while I steadied my voice to answer.

"Yes, it is a wonderful letter," I said. "And indeed you have reason to rejoice in your boy. I quite understand, for I am a Catholic."

"I know you are," said Gilder. "I know you by sight, and who you are, though you don't know me. I sat behind you in the train one day and heard your

conversation with Patterson about Indulgences, and neither you nor he subdued your voices," and Gilder smiled. "I couldn't help hearing, and even wanted to hear, for my interest was aroused. It is because you are a Catholic that I have told you about my boy, for I felt that you would understand."

How strangely things come about. Often by accident, we say, but is it? There is a Divine Providence whose marvelous ways we only see after the event; a blizzard, a stalled train, a hazardous adventure on my part in braving the storm, my meeting with Gilder in the drugstore, his confidence in my sympathy and his exemplification, in his veneration of his dead son, of the beautiful Catholic doctrine of the Communion of Saints, though he had no explicit knowledge of it. Out of his natural affection, lifted up by the spiritual character of Father Flatley's letter, and Gilder was believing and I marveling and tremendously edified by this unsuspected drama of souls shining so luminously in the darkness of the storm. I felt indeed that God's ways are not our ways, and that Gilder was being led to the fullness of the light.

"I do understand most sympathetically," I said. "But I am astonished to see how you, who are not a Catholic, have come not only to the belief, but the practice of the Communion of Saints, for the fresh flowers, the light constantly burning, and your sense of communion in soul with your son and the spiritual refreshment you gather from your devotion to his goodness and his memory are quite in keeping with the Catholic doctrine. Was it ever explained to you?"

Gilder shook his head. "No," he answered. "My devotion, as you call it, only came about a year after I got Father Flatley's letter. I was pretty badly

broken up when I first heard of Regie's death. He was my only earthly tie, and all my human affections centered in him. Indeed, I felt that everything had gone out of my life, though I was never resentful nor rebellious. I accepted it with a certain stoical resignation. I kept reading and re-reading Father Flatley's letter, which at first afforded me some little consolation on its purely human side. But by degrees I began to recognize something else there. It seemed to me as if there were some strange influence emanating from it. I made it a daily meditation until I began to gather from it something more than a merely human sentiment. My boy was not dead but living, and might even be near me. I can't explain it, but this grew into an overwhelming conviction. I used to stand gazing at Regie's portrait, until at times it seemed to smile at me, and I almost thought I heard him speak. With this came a great peace and happiness, until I even became glad. It was then I began to put fresh flowers alongside of his picture as a symbol of joy, and then the thought occurred to me that as he was living I would symbolize that by burning the light before his picture. All this is not a mere subjective feeling or notion on my part, as a skeptic might try to explain it, but an absolute certitude of an objective reality; and, what is more, I think Father Flatley has some part in it, for he too is living in that other great life beyond."

Gilder spoke in a calm but level tone, without the least trace of excitement or exaltation. He was talking of an assured fact.

I studied the man. He was of the ordinary solid, business, matter-of-fact type, of medium size and stockily built. His face was even a trifle heavy,

relieved by clear, intelligent gray eyes and a good forehead. This was no dreamer, but a solid, substantial citizen.

He knew little or nothing about the Catholic Church and its doctrine. He had no idea of the meaning of the Communion of Saints, except the vague notion that it meant some sort of church fellowship as it is understood among the Protestant sects.

I began to explain it to him. His interest grew as I went on.

"The Catholic Church is not only the Church on earth, what we call the Church Militant, whose members are still in the flesh and fighting against the powers of evil to win their salvation, but also the Church Triumphant, consisting of those who have won the battle in time and now possess their reward in the eternal happiness of Heaven, as well as those souls who have passed out of this life and are purging whatever stains of guilt remain with them in the remédial penalties of the purgatorial state. You see then that the Catholic Church is threefold, on Earth, in Purgatory, and in Heaven, united in the spiritual solidárity of the same faith under Christ its head. All the members of this mystical body of Christ are in communion with each other. The participants in this spiritual solidarity are called saints by reason of their destination and of their partaking of the Redemption. We of the Church Militant participate in the same faith, sacraments and government and in the mutual exchange of examples, prayers, merits and satisfactions, between the Church on earth on the one hand, and the Church suffering in Purgatory and the Church Triumphant in Heaven on the other; in suffrages, invocations, intercessions, in veneration.

All merit for each and each for all. "Each for all and all for each," a phrase, by the way, which is not modern, but which comes to us from the twelfth century in the words of Hugh of St. Victor, a medieval theologian, *singula sint omnium et omnia singulorum.* So you see the slogan of Dumas' *Three Musketeers* is not original with that prolific romancer. Now that's the root idea of the Communion of Saints. There is a constant interplay of merit, whether of prayer or action, among all the members of Christ's mystical society, all rooted and energized in Christ's transcendent merit. 'Every pious and holy action done by one belongs and is profitable to all, through charity which seeketh not her own.'

"Even in human affairs we see the working of the principle of one for all and all for one. There is a social and political solidarity of citizenship, and we all participate in it. The good that you and I do as citizens interacts through the whole community. When you and I do our duty as citizens and more than our mere duty by some unusual act of civic virtue or patriotism, every other citizen directly or indirectly participates in the effect. There is a community of fellowship, a solidarity of interest, that makes itself felt throughout the whole social body. That is why civic or national heroes, who in some superlative way have contributed to the common good, are so venerated by their fellow citizens that statues and monuments are erected to their memory. The statues of great statesmen, great soldiers, great philanthropists stand in public places throughout the land. There is the tomb of Grant on Riverside Drive in New York, the noble monument of Lincoln in Washington, the tomb of the unknown soldier in

Arlington Cemetery, the symbol of the nation's tribute and gratitude to all who sacrificed their lives for the nation in the World War. All this is the expression of the solidarity of citizenship, the communion of each in all, and all in each. You see, then, how natural is this sense of inter-communion among all. We belong to each other in the common weal. Now, the Communion of Saints is all this and more in a transcendent and spiritual bond. All souls, whether in Heaven or Purgatory or on earth, belong to one another in Christ through charity, which seeketh not her own."

"That is a very beautiful and heartening belief," said Gilder. "And I am now beginning to understand what I have experienced here, though I did it without knowing."

"Yes, you did it without knowing," I answered, "but it is plain to me that you had a higher illumination than mere knowledge. You had the illumination of grace, and I think that it was the intercession of your own boy, and of Father Flatley too, that brought this singular blessing to you."

Gilder was looking at me intently. He was like a man, who with bandaged eyes, has been guided on his path by an unseen hand, and now has the bandage taken away. He smiled and nodded his head several times. "I see, I see," he said.

"Your boy loved you here," I went on, "and he loves you still, only his love is now glorified. You may be sure of that. His is a constant intercession for his father on earth with his Father in Heaven; and I have no doubt that he is here with you, for he is with God, and God is here and in Him he communes with you in that ineffable way which is the Communion of Saints. Heaven lies about us in our infancy, says the poet, but

Heaven lies about us always in the Communion of Saints. We dwell in an ocean of grace, in the plenitude of God's friendship, and we have but to open our hearts to its superabundance in which all souls participate inexhaustibly, each in common with all and all with each. In the efficacy of that grace the suffering souls share in our prayers and we in the prayers of the blessed in Heaven. Such is the Kingdom of Heaven, the Spiritual City, the society of the Communion of Saints."

Gilder was gazing intently at the portrait of his boy.

It may have been my imagination, but it seemed to me as I too looked that the odor of the flowers in the vases suddenly pervaded the room, and the little light from the burning taper somehow grew brighter and shone with a peculiarly soft radiance around about us. I shall never forget that moment. I do not know, but it seemed for a brief instant that the breath of Eternal Love had sensibly touched us.

It was a year afterward that I heard from Gilder. It was the Jubilee Year and he was in Rome. His message to me was: "I, too, am now in the Communion of Saints. I have been received into the Church and am inexpressibly happy."

THE CHURCH AND THE POPE

"How can a man of your intelligence, Doctor, submit your judgment so completely to the Pope?"

My questioner was a neighbor and fellow commuter, Lingle by name, whom I sometimes met in the trolley car and on the train. The occasion was one Saturday afternoon on the 2:10. (I was coming out from the city early for a round of golf.) I had taken a seat next to Lingle, and he put the question abruptly to me just after our train had started. I looked at him in surprise. My impulse was to return a sharp answer, for there was a latent impertinence in his question, but as I wanted to find out just what was at the back of his head, I refrained.

"What in the world led you to ask me that?" I queried in turn.

"Well, I have often wondered about you," he answered. "I am told that you are quite an intelligent man, a scholar and highly educated."

I made a deprecatory gesture at this point-blank accusation of erudition, for I always dread a reputation which is only too easily surprised when ignorance begins to ask questions or when experts take for granted that one is as familiar as themselves with their own peculiar field.

"I once heard you give a talk on Socialism," Lingle went on, "before the Men's Club, and thought it fine."

I confess that I was tickled at Lingle's appreciation, although I realized from his sudden question that he

entertained a notion that my intelligence was somehow out of gear.

"Now, it really puzzles me," he continued, "how a man of your intelligence can so abjectly accept the Pope's say-so. I have just been reading in the paper about a new Encyclical which the Pope has just issued concerning Modernism in your Church, and forbidding Catholics to entertain the idea at all."

Lingle's challenge to my intelligence was ignorantly impertinent, as is usual for the most part with non-Catholics when they begin to ask us questions about the Faith. There is always a latent assumption that our attitude is queer and that they are talking from a superior level down to us who sit in darkness. Lingle was implying that, although I seemed intelligent, I wasn't after all as intelligent as I seemed, for no really intelligent man would tamely submit to the Pope's "dictation." One's natural impulse under such an accusation is to thrust back with a sharp answer, but that isn't quite charitable; and Lingle after all didn't mean to be personally critical. He was only manifesting a traditional attitude of the non-Catholic mind which takes for granted that Catholics are a mentally inferior class of people. In my instance he could not reconcile my intelligence with my Catholicity; it was to him a case of a square peg in a round hole.

"Lingle," I answered, after making due allowance in the spirit of charity, "did you ever hear of John Henry Newman, the greatest man of letters in England in the nineteenth century? Did you ever hear of Louis Pasteur, the greatest chemist of the same century, whose chemical discoveries revolutionized modern science? Did you ever hear of Chief Justice White of the Supreme Court of the United States, reckoned as sec-

ond only to Chief Justice Marshall of that illustrious tribunal?"

Lingle nodded to each of my questions.

"These three were, you must admit," I went on, "men of superior and exceptional intelligence, and all were Catholics, who accepted the Pope's say-so, as you put it, just as I do. Why then should it puzzle you that a man of my intelligence, whose caliber is far below what theirs was should accept the Pope's teaching and submit to his 'dictation,' as you please to term it, as to what is true in faith and morals? Would it surprise you if I said that humanly speaking it was because they were so intelligent that they looked to the Pope's infallible guidance in such matters?"

"Of course I know that Cardinal Newman was a Catholic," said Lingle, "but I never thought of Pasteur and Chief Justice White as being Catholics. Indeed, I never thought of it one way or the other."

"All right," I went on, "but knowing now that these three illustrious examples of exceptionally superior intelligence were Catholics—and I could enumerate many more—you can see that there is no difficulty in reconciling intelligence with the acceptance of the Pope as an infallible teacher in faith and morals; and in fact, Lingle, I believe that any intelligent man who accepts the divinity of Christ without prejudice, and who applies his intelligence logically to the question of the Pope's claim to be the authoritative teacher of mankind in faith and morals, will come to the same conclusion as did Newman and Pasteur and Chief Justice White."

Lingle was rather nonplussed with my citation of three such notable intelligences on my side of the case. It fairly cut the ground from under his feet.

He took refuge in gazing out of the window at the passing landscape.

"And now," I went on, "let me in turn ask you a question which I trust you won't think impertinent. Did you ever think who and what the Pope is? The answer to that will, I am confident, solve your perplexity as to why an intelligent man accepts the Pope as his spiritual teacher and guide."

Lingle admitted that he had never asked himself who and what the Pope is. He knew that Catholics believed the Pope was the visible head of the Catholic Church, but beyond that he had never ventured to inquire.

"I take it, Lingle, that you hold there is a God and that He made a revelation to mankind first through the Jewish people, and a further revelation through Jesus Christ, whose divinity I assume you believe in."

Lingle declared that he was a Methodist in good standing in his church and did believe in Christ as God and Redeemer, and in the Bible as the revered word of God, the Rule of Faith.

"Very good then," I said. "Let us go to the New Testament and see if we can find there who and what the Pope is. First of all, we find there that Christ established a society, namely, a Church which He commissioned to teach His doctrines throughout the world to the end of time. You no doubt remember Christ's words to His disciples as given in the Gospel of St. Matthew: 'All power is given to me in heaven and on earth. Going, therefore, teach ye all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and behold I am with you always even to the consummation of the

world.' There are many other texts in the gospels, as also in the Acts of the Apostles, explicitly showing that Christ instituted a society with full powers to carry on its work and fulfill its purpose. Now every society must have a head; even a baseball club or a football team has a captain to command and direct it. Every human society, political, civic, municipal or social, for whatever purpose it seeks to achieve, has a head. Every society has an organization to coördinate its functions and an executive to carry them out. This is too evident to be gainsaid. Now, when Christ constituted His society, He appointed a head for it, and that head was one of the apostles, Simon Bar-Jonah, more familiarly known as the Apostle Peter. You, no doubt, read the New Testament."

Lingle said he sometimes read a chapter or two.

"Do you recall the sixteenth chapter of St. Matthew? Christ there asks His followers for a confession of faith as to who He was. Simon Peter answered and said: 'Thou art Christ the Son of the living God, and Jesus answering said to him: 'Blessed art thou Simon Bar-Jonah: because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to Thee, but my Father who is in heaven. And I say to thee: that thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven.' Note the circumstances of Christ's words. Peter makes his profession of faith in the divinity of his Master, 'the Son of the living God,' not a mere human declaration prompted by any human motive. but a revelation by God Himself vouchsafed

to Peter, singled out from the rest of the disciples. Therefore was Peter chosen, and therefore was he selected as the very rock upon which the Church was to be built, the foundation upon which the whole edifice was to rest and be sustained. And against that Church, resting on Peter as its secure basis, the gates of Hell, the forces of evil, shall never prevail. But not only is Peter the foundation, but into his keeping are given the keys of Christ's Kingdom to loose and bind. Here is a most solemn—nothing could be more solemn—institution of Peter, not only as the rock, but Peter as keeper of the keys. Recall the other passage from St. Matthew I quoted a moment ago, where Christ says, 'All power is given to me in heaven and on earth.' Christ is lord of heaven and earth, and in virtue of His supreme power, He delegates Peter to be keeper of the keys with power to bind and loose. Peter is selected for this tremendous grant, which is bestowed with the utmost solemnity in the presence of other disciples. The occasion, the special revelation of Christ's divinity to Peter and the words in which that grant is given are vested with the full authority of the Lord of Heaven and earth. Nothing could be plainer than Christ's momentous words, nor more direct and imposing than the office placed in Peter's hands. Peter is made the foundation of Christ's establishment and the supreme guardian on earth of the divine kingdom."

Lingle was impressed, but not convinced.

"But why should Christ select Peter out of all the others?" he demanded.

"That's not the question in hand," I answered. "But the fact is He did select Peter. That's all I'm getting at just now."

"Yes, but may it not be that Christ was addressing the others through Peter, and was thus giving the grant to all?" answered Lingle.

"If you will consider Christ's words as He uttered them, and the circumstances of their deliverance, you will find that there is not the slightest warrant for your supposition. Who was it proclaimed the divinity of Christ in answer to the Lord's question? Peter, and Peter alone. And how did Peter know that Christ was the Son of the living God? By a special revelation to Peter, and to Peter alone. Again, it was Peter alone that Christ called blessed, because of that special revelation. Peter alone is called 'Peter' the rock, the special name given by Christ to Peter alone. Simon Bar-Jonah (Simon the son of Jonah) was the apostle's name, but he became Peter, which is a rock (that's the meaning of the word), by virtue of becoming the foundation, or the rock upon which the Church was to be built. Throughout the entire passage wherein Christ makes Peter the foundation and invests him with the power of the keys, Christ speaks to Peter in the singular number: '*thou* art Peter,' 'and I will give to *thee* the keys of the kingdom,' 'whatsoever *thou* shalt bind,' and 'whatsoever *thou* shalt loose.'

"And now let me call your attention to another passage of the Gospels, this time from St. John's Gospel, where Peter again is selected before all the rest, and just as solemnly and pointedly declared leader, and given headship over not only all the other disciples, but over the whole society, which is the Church of Christ. It was before the Resurrection, when Christ was going about preaching to the people, that Peter was declared to be the future foundation and the power of the keys was given to him. It was after the Resur-

rection, and on the eve of the Ascension, as narrated by St. John in the last chapter of his Gospel, that Christ selected Peter again out of all the rest, and solemnly conferred upon him the headship of His Church. 'This is now the third time,' says St. John, 'that Jesus was manifested to his disciples, after he was risen from the dead. When therefore they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter: Simon, son of John, lovest thou me more than these? He saith to Him: Yes, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. He saith to him: Feed my lambs.'

" 'He saith to him again: Simon, son of John, lovest thou me? He saith to him: Yes, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. He saith to him: Feed my lambs.'

" 'He saith to him the third time: Simon, son of John, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved, because he said to him the third time: lovest thou me? And he said to him: Lord: thou knowest all things: thou knowest that I love thee. He said to him: Feed my sheep'."

"By the lambs and the sheep Christ means the entire flock, of which He had already declared Himself to be the shepherd. He calls Himself the good shepherd, who has solicitude for all the flock, even for those that stray away, and who would lay down His life for the flock. Christ, in the scene described by St. John, invests Peter with the guardianship of the flock, and makes Peter the chief shepherd on earth in His place, now that He was about to depart into Heaven. Peter, by triple injunction, is solemnly made the visible head of the visible flock on earth.

"Note that Peter is thus appointed Christ's vicar on earth, that is, to take Christ's place as the one who shall henceforth feed the lambs and the sheep, namely,

teach without fail all the members of the Church the sound doctrine that Christ has commanded to be taught, and govern them in all that pertains to faith and morals. Peter is henceforth the shepherd, the guide and custodian of the entire society on earth, founded by Christ. Remember also that Christ, as the Gospel tells us, prayed for Peter in a special way, that Satan might not sift him as wheat, and that he might confirm all his brethren in the Faith. Peter is the rock; Peter is the keeper of the keys, with full authority to bind and loose, and Peter is the shepherd. If words mean anything, it is to Peter that the supreme lordship on earth of Christ's Church is given.

"Attempts have been made and are still being made to twist Christ's words from their plain and direct meaning, but no man who reads these words without prejudice, that is, without some preconceived notion of his own, can take from them the only real meaning they can have, for Christ was instituting with the greatest solemnity that society which was to carry His message to the world to the end of time, and therefore there could be no ambiguity in the momentous words of His speaking in the minds of His immediate hearers, and of the hearers that were yet to come. To wrest the clear and open sense of His words to something other than their obvious content is to violate the words themselves as well as their context, and make Christ speak nonsense to defeat His purpose in founding His society and in securing its integrity for the future.

"He was not founding a loose and ephemeral association for the moment, but an everlasting society, knit together in a perpetual unity of doctrine and discipline. 'Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall not pass away,' is Christ's own declaration of the

eternity of His word. That the establishment which He built up to bring His word to all the world should fail within the limits of time, and that His wisdom knew not how to provide for its perpetuity as long as the world shall last, is really to deny His divinity and destroy His credibility as the divine teacher of mankind."

"You put it pretty strongly," said Lingle, "and I must confess it looks very plausible, but——"

"Pardon me, Lingle, there are no buts. Plausible? Good heavens, man, the Gospel narrative, in Christ's own words, is plain as a pikestaff! Don't try to distort them! Any man with a little common sense who reads them for the first time, without any preconception or any knowledge of the quibbling controversies about them, will come to the one conclusion which their very simplicity and directness convey, namely, that Christ was founding a perpetual society with Peter as its head with full and supreme authority."

"Yes, but not everybody gives them the meaning that you do," said Lingle. "Doesn't that show that there may be another interpretation besides yours?"

"And who is it tries to interpret them any other way than the Catholic way except those who deny Peter's headship? Just recall that for fifteen hundred years the sole meaning given to the words of Christ was the Catholic meaning. That meaning was given to them from the beginning and not challenged until the Protestant sects came into existence in the last four hundred years, because they have refused to accept Peter, and because they wanted to deny Peter. You must remember that there has been a direct line of Peters as successive heads of the Church back to the first Peter, two hundred and sixty-one Peters in all up

to the present time, the longest and most historic line of rulers the world has ever seen, and the present Peter now happily reigning is just as much the rock, the keeper of the keys, and the supreme shepherd as was the first Peter. Otherwise Christ's words were vain and His society a failure."

"Yes, I know the Catholic Church is the old historic Church, but in time it became corrupt, and the pure gospel needed to be restored," asserted Lingle.

"Then Christ's prayer for Peter was in vain," I answered; "and the gates of Hell have prevailed, the rock has crumbled and the keys of the Kingdom are futile to open and shut. The shepherd has been faithless, and Christ was mistaken when He thought He was building an indefectible and perpetual society on a rock, which error and evil would assault in vain. Pardon me, Lingle, but your divided sects, which have denied Peter, are witnesses to the very conditions I have just pointed out, because they are Peterless societies, without a head, without a shepherd, without unity. They are buffeted about by every wind of doctrine. They have multiplied like rank weeds in a neglected garden. There are as many sects among you as there have been Peters throughout the ages safeguarding the doctrine of Christ from the assaults of heresy. 'I know mine and mine know me,' said Christ, speaking of the sheep and the shepherd, but you don't know the shepherd and you don't even know yourselves. You are a hopelessly divided crowd without unity of doctrine or leadership or discipline. You not only deny Peter, but many of you have come to deny Christ Himself. You deny His divinity, and many of you have whittled Him down to a mere ethical teacher, a mere human pedagogue who did not really know what He Himself meant

by His own words. Again, many of you who once set up the Bible as your fetish over against the living Church have in turn thrown that into the discard and fashioned your own little creeds after your own vain imaginings, under the delusion that you are marching under the variegated banners of modern progress. You know as well as I the endless divisions that tear you asunder and the babel of confusions that obtains among the Protestant remnants."

"Oh, I say, Doctor, but you are hard on us," said Lingle. "It isn't as bad as all that. We may not be in perfect accord, but after all we have the same substantial belief——"

"What is it?" I interjected.

"We all believe in Christ."

"*What* do you believe?" I asked. "You remember Christ's questions to His disciples: 'Who do you say I am?' and Peter's answer: 'Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God.' Are you ready to answer as Peter did? Do you believe that Christ is the Son of the living God?"

"Yes, I think so," replied Lingle, rather reflectively, as if turning the matter over in his mind.

"That is, you believe that Christ is true God?" I broke in. "You remember of course that Christ said: 'I and the Father are one'; and when the Pharisees questioning Him, sought to entrap Him, He told them: 'Before Abraham was *I am*.' Only God could say that. And do you remember that His offense against the Jews was that He declared Himself to be God and that it was for that blasphemy, as they called it, they crucified Him? Peter's profession of faith was that Christ is God. Who do you say He is? True God of true God, the Son of the living God?"

"Why, I don't know that I am prepared to answer that exactly as you put it. You see, I am not a theologian——"

"I am not asking you as a theologian. I am asking you simply as a Christian who says that he 'believes in Christ.' I ask you what you believe; and on the first fundamental doctrine of Christianity, which is its very keystone, and without which it crumbles to a shapeless ruin, namely, that Christ is God, your belief is neither clear nor final. Your statement that all Protestants agree in believing in Christ lapses into a vague and empty formula without definition, even in your own individual case. In the case of the sects into which Protestantism is split, you will find the same vagueness and inconclusiveness. Your Modernists are hopelessly at sea over it, and many of them have minimized Christ down to a mere human religious teacher, morally great you admit, but empty of all divinity.

"No, you do not substantially agree on Christ. On the contrary, you substantially disagree on Him, for the very essence of His teaching is that He is the Son of the living God, true God of true God. You have abandoned the Bible to the attacks of skeptical critics who make out the Bible to be a mere piece of human literature, and you who used to invoke it against the Catholic Church as the sole Rule of Faith, have now left it to her alone to defend it in its integrity as the inspired word of God. Catholics do believe in Christ fully and without reservation, and that His word shall endure forever, and that He is the way, the truth and the life. They believe that He established an indefectible and living Church which possesses, interprets and guards His doctrine without error for the salvation

of mankind. That Church is alive, a living society vitalized and energized by His Divine power and quickened by the ever-abiding Spirit of Truth which came down upon it in tongues of fire after He had ascended into Heaven."

"You are certainly very positive and definite about your belief," said Lingle; "and I admire you for it, but you cannot expect me to be as dogmatic as you are. Yours is a dogmatic church, mine is not. My church gives me more freedom and allows me latitude, you see."

"Suppose, Lingle, you were on a vessel in mid-ocean, and the captain navigating the ship were to tell you that he had no definite latitude and longitude to help him find his bearings and reckon his course, and that his compass was very uncertain. How would you feel? Your assurance of ever reaching port would be badly shattered, wouldn't it? Now Peter's bark, on which I am sailing, has the exact latitude and longitude to reckon by, and an unfailing compass. Your notion of more freedom and latitude looks to me like pure hallucination. Only crazy people would entrust their safety to a captain whose knowledge of navigation is defective and whose compass is not true.

"At the start of our conversation you questioned my intelligence in placing my confidence in a ship whose captain has sailed all the seas safely for two thousand years through every imaginable storm and tempest, and whose knowledge of navigation is sure and certain. Who shows more intelligence? You who are negligently content to trust yourself to an inexperienced captain who confesses his ignorance, or I who know my captain to have complete and absolute knowledge of the art of navigation? Furthermore, I

know my ship is staunch and sound against every peril. There is no danger which it has not triumphantly survived. Its crew is skilled and true. It is Peter's bark and Christ is always with it."

"I admit," said Lingle, "that your Church is the most wonderful organization that the world has ever seen, and indeed I admire its perfect order and discipline. Nevertheless, I feel that it enslaves the mind and demands abject submission."

"One moment, Lingle, before you go on along that line. You say that my church is the most wonderful organization the world has ever seen. Pardon me, did you ever stop to ask yourself *why?* That should give you pause. It came out of an obscure little province of the Roman Empire amidst an intensely hostile people who put its founder to a shameful death, the death of a malefactor. It braved the fury of pagan Rome which brought all its tremendous power in ten raging persecutions to crush it out of existence. It finally conquered its persecutors and won them over to its recognition and acceptance. It cleansed and purified the cesspool of pagan degeneracy. It lived through the repeated storms of barbarous invaders and internal civic strife which disintegrated the imperial power. It preserved and saved what was sound in Roman civilization, its superb methods of organization, its law and its social forms that proved of value. It sheltered and took to its bosom the classical literatures which otherwise would have perished utterly in the maelstrom of the dissolving Empire. It took the new peoples that had flowed over from the outside into the devastated spaces of the old Roman order and made them anew into the better and nobler civilization of Europe. It watched at the cradle of the nations,

nursed them through their infancy up to youth, and guided and directed them to maturity. It sent out its missionaries to the ends of the earth to Christianize and sanctify them. Its religious pioneers went into the wilderness and made it blossom into rich gardens of culture and civilization. It gradually abolished slavery and then serfdom. It inspired and directed the arts. It created new styles of architecture and noble literatures far beyond the conception of the pagan world.

"It planted and fostered the new liberty among men by the enfranchisement of the individual in the larger freedom of their spiritual destiny over and beyond the secular despotism of the State, which alone the pagan world knew. It fostered and cherished learning and science, notwithstanding your Protestant notion that it didn't, for Protestantism has not only ignored the history and life of the Catholic Church, but worse than that, has conspired in calumny and slander to make it out the foe of learning and science. It founded and built schools and universities, as well as great philosophical and theological systems.

"Whilst the Catholic Church was doing all these things, it was constantly fighting against internal and external enemies, heresies and rebellions, false doctrines and false philosophies, persecutions, tyrannies, the greeds and ambitions of unscrupulous princes and kings, as well as the treacheries and betrayals of Judases in its own household. You may indeed call it the most wonderful institution in the world, and admire in astonished awe its organization and discipline. But how do you account for all this, its stability, its unchanging base, its wide expansion and development, its indefectibility, its marvelous survival through

all the vicissitudes of two thousand years where it alone remains one and the same, ever old and ever new, and all things to all men?

"If the Catholic Church were a man-made institution it would have perished long ago, as have all human institutions which were existing when it was founded. It has survived and remained intact because it is not a mere human organization, but a supernatural society founded by the Son of the living God, built by Him on Peter, the rock, and committed to the end of the world to Peter as holder of the keys of the Kingdom, as shepherd of the flock, as His vicar on earth.

"That is why men of Newman's, Pasteur's and Justice White's intelligence, and my own much more humble intelligence, accept Peter's guidance and headship in faith and morals.

"Your first question inpugned my intelligence. I think my intelligence is amply vindicated by what I have pointed out to you. But now, pardon me again, what about your own intelligence? I believe that you will find it both illuminated and strengthened by a little study of the points I have only briefly touched upon in our talk. I hope that you will take in good part what I have said. I have no doubt of your good faith and sincerity. What I would most urge is that you do not take the Catholic Church to be what you imagine it to be in your confessed lack of knowledge of its real character and its history. I am not impugning your intelligence. I am simply pointing out your indifference to and ignorance of the greatest and most wonderful institution in the world. Don't you think it would be worth the while to enquire into and study it a bit?"

TERRIBLE TIMES AND ORIGINAL SIN

Billings sat alongside of me that morning on the 8:30. In the seat ahead, Jeremiah Jerome Flannigan was turned half way around talking to me over the back of the seat—Mr. Flannigan, Esq. I so designate him because he was a man of vast importance in his own estimation, with a tremendous dose of vanity in his make-up, but withal an excellent, good, pious man with a big heart. He was president of the St. Vincent de Paul Conference in our parish, and lived up to the full dignity of the honor—and wanted you to know it. His vanity was harmless, and his goodness practical. He not only gave generously of his means, but worked zealously and solicitously in person among the poor whom the Society cared for. Mr. Flannigan, Esq., was a real edification in the parish of Our Lady of Consolation. Everybody respected him, and those who knew him well had a sincere regard for him. His vanity was too transparent and forgivable to arouse any feeling of irritation.

Mr. Flannigan, Esq., and I were talking over some St. Vincent de Paul cases. Billings was absorbed in his newspaper. Billings was a banker, a third or fourth or fifth vice-president (I don't remember exactly what degree of v.p. he filled) in a big banking institution in the city. I first got to know him as a fellow member of the Committee of Public Safety in our town during the war. We were all keenly patriotic in those strenuous days. Billings was terribly in earnest, in fact so

were we all. Our town was situated along Long Island Sound. It was possible that an enemy U-boat some day or night might rise from the depths of the waters and bombard us, or hostile aeroplanes suddenly sail over us and drop bombs! Such contingencies might arise, so it was only prudence to provide against them. Hence our Committee of Public Safety which was organized along military lines.

The town authorities put us under the chief of police, who was generalissimo of our entire battalion, which was made up of a number of squads, in turn composed of selected citizens from each voting district in the town. Billings commanded a squad representing his district, and I one representing mine. Each squad was drilled under its captain, and all the squads as a battalion under the chief of police. It was strenuous work, especially when we drilled under the chief. He was a stern and stentorian disciplinarian.

One Saturday afternoon the battalion—everybody in full uniform and very "chesty" indeed—assembled on the roomy dock just off of our public park on the waterfront for a drill under the chief. It was our first drill as a battalion, and we, the captains, were nervous over the coming ordeal, which was to put our efficiency to the test. The squads were all lined up waiting, when the chief in a thundering voice ordered all the captains to come to him. We obeyed, and with what seemed to us due military precision, marched up to the chief and saluted. But Billings, misunderstanding the order, brought up his entire squad.

"Why in thunder did you bring these fellows?" shouted the chief, under frowning brows. "Order them back!"

Billings' face flamed red.

"I thought—" he began.

"It doesn't matter what you thought," interrupted the chief. "Order them back!"

Billings turned to his squad and then turned around again facing the chief.

"I said, order them back!" again fulminated our Jovian generalissimo.

"Yes, I heard," faltered Billings. "But—but how do you do it?"

The dignity of the battalion nearly went to pieces then, but we managed to suppress our risibles enough not to shatter it entirely, and there was a half-grim smile about the corners of the chief's mouth. Billings himself laughed over it afterwards with the rest of us. "It wasn't half as funny," he declared, "as Delaney marching the front rank of his squad off the dock when he couldn't remember to call 'Halt!' "

Such was the way I became acquainted with Billings, home comrades in the Great War, who couldn't serve our country abroad. I may remark that Billings had two sons in France, and I three, a fact that led us to be a little more comradely than we might have been otherwise.

Billings was deep in his newspaper as Mr. Flannigan, Esq., and I talked. Suddenly he turned to me, and, pointing to a flaming headline, exclaimed, "Isn't it terrible, just terrible?"

"What's so terrible?" I asked. Mr. Flannigan, Esq., also registered interrogation.

"All this flagrant crime around us. Here is an account of bandits attacking an armored car, killing one man and wounding another, right in the public street, and getting away with fifty thousand dollars!"

Billings was a banker, and the loss of fifty thousand

dollars in cold cash set him on edge. His voice rose in strident indignation. "What's the world coming to, anyway? Nothing safe, nothing safe these days. It's simply outrageous. The authorities are utterly lax in affording us protection."

"It's pretty bad, I admit," I answered. "But, after all, you know that human nature isn't everything it ought to be."

"I don't see what that has got to do with it," responded Billings with petulance. "It's the police. They're rotten. And they're rotten because politics is rotten. We need a thorough cleaning up, a genuine reform——"

"We do indeed," I agreed, "but there's the rub. How are we going to bring it about? You say the police are responsible, and back of the police lies the responsibility of the politicians, and back of the politicians, who's responsible? You and I, who vote the politicians in, or maybe don't vote at all. I really believe, Billings, that the reform should begin with ourselves. When I say ourselves, I mean everybody, you and I and Mr. Flannigan here."

Mr. Flannigan, Esq., cocked his eye at me and grinned. "Sure," he exclaimed, "that's the way of it, that's the way of it. A good retreat, where we get a straight look at ourselves, a good spiritual scrubbing——"

Billings regarded Mr. Flannigan, Esq., with puzzled eyes. "Flannigan means by a retreat," I said, explaining, "a brief retirement from the world and its affairs to conduct an introspection of one's spiritual condition under the guidance of a competent spiritual director, with appropriate exercises, for a definite period, usually about three days."

"I don't quite understand," said Billings.

"It's something like an investigation in your bank when the bank examiners come in. They go into your accounts and business affairs to find exactly how the bank stands. A retreat is like this in the spiritual order, an examination of our spiritual status, to see how the ledger of our soul balances."

"Oh," exclaimed Billings.

"The reason we do this," I went on, "is that we understand how defective is our human nature, that it is in need of constant overhauling and repairing, as it were."

"A very sensible and practical measure," interrupted Billings, nodding approvingly. The parallel to a bank investigation brought the meaning of a retreat home to him. There is nothing better for illustrating a point that is strange to another man's mind than correlating it with something that is already familiar to him. Billings was strong on banking, but weak, I am afraid, on spiritual ideas.

"I am glad," I said, "that you recognize the value of a spiritual investigation every once in a while. We have also the Sacrament of Penance, which is commonly called the Confessional, as a means of spiritual renovation. There we make a clean breast of all our sins and faults, and seek counsel from a spiritual guide. Now, you don't have anything like that in a bank, but I believe a similar practice might improve the banking business. It's a wonderful regulator of conscience, you know."

I don't know how my statement about a confessional in banks struck Billings, for just then Mr. Flannigan, Esq., injected himself into the conversation with the highly irrelevant suggestion that Billings himself go

on a retreat that week-end with Mr. Flannigan, Esq., at the House of Retreats on Staten Island. Billings looked up in a startled way.

"Me!" he exclaimed, "Why, I'm not a Catholic. I haven't any religion at all. I'm an Agnostic."

"All the better," said Flannigan; "it will help take some of that poison out of you. Agnostic, is it? Glory be! I'd as soon be an Orangeman. Indeed, but you need some spiritual doctoring."

Billings flushed up, and his eyes hardened.

"Look here, Flannigan," he rapped out, "when I want any advice from you, spiritual or otherwise, I'll ask for it."

"Well, it's waitin' for you any time you want it, and what's more, it won't cost you anything either," snapped back Flannigan. The two men fairly glared at each other. I didn't know it at the time, and neither did Flannigan, but it seems that Billings originally came from Ulster. Fortunately for the peace of Ireland at the moment, the conductor came along to collect our tickets. Billings picked up his newspaper again and plunged into it, and when Mr. Flannigan, Esq., turned around to resume the conversation, he found a barricade of print between himself and Billings. I saw this out of the tail of my eye, for I was gazing out of the window at the landscape rushing by. Mr. Flannigan, Esq., looked daggers for a moment at the flaming headlines that stared back at him, and then, turning, squared himself in his seat with an eloquent shrug of contempt for a foe that had refused him battle. I breathed relief, for here was the beginning of an acrimonious quarrel which had been happily nipped in the bud by the innocent intervention of an obliging conductor.

I sat for a time silent and thankful, when Billings turned to me again, and pointing to the headlines of a flaming divorce scandal which literally dripped with filth, and which the newspapers had been drooling out to the public for a week past, remarked:

"The world has come to a pretty pass when such things can happen and the newspapers are allowed to print them."

I admitted Billings' indictment of the state of public morals.

"Conditions," I said, "are obviously and flagrantly bad. Hold-ups, murders, divorces, embezzlements, burglaries, drunkenness in spite of prohibition, crimes among the young—three-fourths of the crime is committed by youth, I am informed—laxity everywhere, even among the elderly, vulgar and indecent dances, a feverish and constant pursuit of pleasure, discipline forgotten, indulgence and excess flaunted openly, all these in bold and stark nakedness day in and day out——"

"Just so, just so," interrupted Billings, applauding, not of course the crimes, but my rehearsal of them. "It's terrible to think of! How is all this going to end? What are we coming to? We shall have to pay for it."

"We shall," I agreed, "and it's the Devil to pay."

"Eh? how's that?" ejaculated Billings sharply.

"Just what I said," I answered. "It's the Devil to pay."

"Of course that's a figure of speech on your part," said Billings with a half smile.

"Not at all," I answered. "The expression is often used as a figure of speech, but it has a terrific literal meaning."

"But assuredly you don't believe in the Devil," challenged Billings with a rising inflection of surprise.

"And why not?"

"It's absurd," declared Billings. "There's plenty of badness without the myth of a personal Devil."

"Nothing pleases the Devil better than to be taken for a myth," I answered. "An unseen enemy who is regarded as a figment has a tremendous advantage. He snipes you all the easier when you ignore his presence —but that aside for the moment. You say that there is plenty of badness, or shall we call it evil, without him. Whence is all the evil we see around us which you have just been deploring as terrible?"

"It's just human nature, I suppose," said Billings, shrugging his shoulders.

"All right, but why should human nature be so bad? You and I have been bewailing the wickedness of the times. You attribute it in part to the laxness of the authorities in protecting us from lawlessness, and shift the responsibility to the politicians. I suggested our own responsibility for the politicians. Then again there are the patent social laxness and disorder which stare so painfully from the pages of the press and are also known personally to us. You and I know of plenty of scandals in our own town, social, financial and otherwise."

Billings vigorously nodded his assent, especially over our own home scandals. We had had several in the past month; two cases of elopement in both of which married people were involved. This double event had set the whole town agog, and on the top of it came a big embezzlement in one of our local banks, which seemed especially nefarious to Billings' banking conscience.

"And what we know, Billings," I went on, "is nothing to what we don't know of human iniquities. If we could only lift the lid in all the communities of the country, rural and urban, we would, no doubt, stand aghast at the mess simmering beneath. Happily, the sewers are underground."

"It would be dreadful, indeed," murmured Billings, as if communing with himself.

"You see, Billings, human nature is a pretty weak brother; murder, lying, stealing, adultery, unnatural vice, broken promises, broken faith, perjury, calumny, slander, backbiting, drunkenness, gluttony, envy, avarice, sloth, violence, revenge—how little we see after all. The public press shovels into its garbage pail scarcely a tithe of the dreadful count."

Billings' face had puckered into innumerable wrinkles of disgust.

"Besides this host of social and moral evils," I went on, "there are innumerable physical evils that beset mankind. There are war, slaughter, pestilence, famine, and the army of diseases that are constantly ravaging us. There are the lame, the halt, the blind, the defective, the insane, in short, troubles and tribulations of all sorts on our shoulders—who escapes? And last, but not least, death."

"Why, Doctor!" exclaimed Billings. "What a calamitous catalogue. I didn't know that you were such a pessimist."

"Scarcely," I answered. "I am only trying to account for the terrible times of which you have just been complaining. I am simply getting down to the roots. You ascribe these evils of the hour to the failure of the authorities to suppress them. I am going deeper. I am accounting for the failure of the authori-

ties and the politicians, and what lies back of this, ourselves, namely, human nature. Police, politicians, criminals and sinners all are of the same human stuff. What I want to get at is what's the trouble with the human stuff of which we are all made? You and I of the elder generation look askance upon the terrible times that flout us insolently to our faces, and we complain that they are the worst ever. Well, there never has been an elder generation in the history of mankind that didn't put up the same lamentation, which bears witness to the fact that there have always been terrible times. It is always the elder generation that does the calamity howling, and for an excellent reason. It is always the elder generation that gets a long perspective of life. It has traveled the muddy road of experience. It has slipped and befouled itself and knows the stench of the slime.

> —the world
> Is flesh and shadow—I have had my day.
> The dirty nurse, Experience, in her kind
> Hath foul'd me—

says the fool—a wise fool—in Tennyson's *Idylls*. Now the younger generation has no perspective of life, and goes tramping through the mud of experience thinking it is having a jolly time. The elder generation, whose lust of life time has cooled off into reflection, in part forgetting its young adventures, and in part only dimly remembering the slips of the past, shakes its wise old head and holds up its hands in horror. I am not saying that the elder generation hasn't good reason to be horrified, but don't let us be unco righteous. No generation has ever had a monopoly of virtue. Evil is with us and always has been with us.

This fact is evident. But I want to get back of the fact. How is it to be explained?"

Mr. Flannigan, Esq., had turned around again and was listening intently to the conversation. His voice suddenly became injected with a raucous inflection.

"What would an Agnostic be knowing about it, anyway? He's nothing but a know-nothing."

Billings glanced coldly at him, but ignored him, for which I was thankful, for I could see that Mr. Flannigan, Esq., was aching to renew ancient hostilities. I stole a monitory glance at him, covertly bidding him hold off.

"You raise a tremendous question there, Doctor," Billings answered, addressing himself to me solely. "It's a large problem."

"At any rate, it's a tremendous and universal fact. How do you account for it?" I asked.

"Well, I guess it's just human nature, as you say," and Billings was for letting it go at that.

"But why is it just human nature? Why should human nature be so prone to the seven deadly sins and their bitter fruit? What is it in human nature that makes it stagger so violently, painfully and sorrowfully along its thorny way?"

"Oh, I suppose," answered Billings, "it's man working his way up from the beast, the tiger and the ape in him."

"If I believed that," Flannigan blurted in, "I'd go hang myself with a halter like Judas Iscariot. Devil a bit of ape am I, nor me ancestors before me. It's a whopping insult to any decent man to say such a thing."

I hastily interrupted.

"Mr. Billings was talking in the abstract, Mr. Flan-

nigan, academically only; 'in a manner of speaking,' as the elder Mr. Weller might say. He was only voicing a current notion, derived from an hypothesis, formulated in defense of a theory called evolution. They call it a working hypothesis, and the only trouble with it is that it doesn't work."

I was addressing myself to Billings, Mr. Flannigan, Esq., nodding approval from the sidelines.

"To attempt to account," I went on, "for the human mess around us by saying that it is simply the ape working itself out in man, is assuming first that man derives from the brute, which is an unproved hypothesis conceived for the sake of bolstering another hypothesis; and secondly that the human ascends from a lower bestial state, which is in flat contradiction to the universal tradition of the whole race, that mankind has fallen from a higher estate. While the tradition among all the peoples of the earth, civilized and uncivilized, takes various shapes, some of them grotesque in the extreme, there is a substantial and constant attestation in all these traditions that man has come down and not up. Coming down and coming up are opposites.

"Why this universal and persistent sense of a fall, if the human movement was really an ascent, a coming up to better and happier conditions? If there was an escape from a worse to a better state, would not that have registered itself in human consciousness as a joyful relief from antecedent misery? As it is, man has always given testimony to a sense of failure and bemoaned the loss of a pristine estate of golden felicity, which he forfeited by some original transgression, a rebellion against some prohibition, imposed by a higher power as the sanction and safeguard of the gifts of

happiness conferred upon him in the beginning. You yourself, Billings, have just borne witness to the sense of failure in human affairs in deploring the terrible times we are witnessing and the descent of the present generation into a worse state than when we were young."

"That's a fact," declared Billings emphatically. "When I was a young man an intoxicated youth was taboo in decent society, and as for young women, or any woman for that matter, drinking and carrying on as they do to-day, it was unheard of except among the lowest elements of society." And Billings' voice conveyed how shocking were present conditions. "But there is a remedy. Do away with the conditions which give opportunity to the prevalent laxity. For example, enforce prohibition to the hilt, take away all chance of getting liquor, tighten the reins, put on the curb rigidly——"

"One moment, Billings," I interrupted. "Why is it that prohibition isn't enforced? Why is it that you can't enforce it? I am not now raising the question whether prohibition is right or not, whether it is wise or otherwise. Don't you see that the failure to enforce prohibition and secure its full effects comes squarely up against the real point at issue—the trouble with human nature itself? There's the rub. Why doesn't human nature enforce, and why doesn't human nature comply with the law? And why does human nature insist upon choosing the primrose path of dalliance? Looking back over history and the world as it is to-day, we realize that there is some radical defect in human nature, something terribly wrong somewhere. What is it?"

"Give it up," Billings said, and shrugged his shoulders.

"Working out the beast in us doesn't explain. Successfully sloughing off the lower should give us an eminent sense of satisfaction. But man has no such sense of satisfaction. Under the repeated assaults of the seven deadly sins and the final revenge of death, humanity crumples up in a ghastly catastrophe. I know of only one explanation, and that is the Catholic doctrine of Original Sin; it does explain."

"Why, I thought," said Billings in genuine astonishment, "that the notion of Original Sin had been dropped long ago as a sort of primitive myth of no value in these days of enlightenment."

"Well, the Catholic Church hasn't dropped it. It is one of her fundamental doctrines, and it explains human nature as nothing else does. You shrug your shoulders and give the problem up. That's a pessimistic surrender. Do away with the doctrine of Original Sin, and you leave the world a monstrous enigma. You deny St. George and accept the dragon."

"What do you mean?" asked Billings.

"I mean that you accept the law of tooth and claw, the law of violence, the law of evil with evil victorious. The indisputable fact that man is subject to sin, crime, disease and death clamors in your ears from earth and sea and sky; history replicates it to you from the beginning; it thunders all around you like the roar of a cataract and you shrug your shoulders!"

"Well, doesn't your doctrine of Original Sin simply accentuate the fact?" said Billings with petulance in his voice.

"It answers it, Billings. It makes light what was

dark. It reveals the root of the trouble and points out its remedy. It is a doctrine that must be taken with its complement, the doctrine of Redemption. When the race fell through the original transgression of its head, Adam, the promise of a Redeemer was given, and that promise has been fulfilled in Our Lord, Jesus Christ. But let us first say what is meant by Original Sin, for it is not always understood. You entertain no doubt the notion that Catholics mean by Original Sin some sort of a disease inherited from Adam."

I could see from the expression of Billings' face that that was just the idea he did entertain. Mr. Flannigan, Esq., was listening with malign benignance on his countenance. I could see that he was relishing what he was picturing in his own mind as the confounding of an Agnostic and an Orangeman to boot. I myself entertained no such bellicose mood. Billings was not a bigot; he was a mere Agnostic, which is worse, for Agnosticism means indifference, and indifference spells moral apathy, which is akin to spiritual death. Now your bigot has a fierce regard for his conviction, whatever it be, and will fight for it. He is belligerently alive. When you hit him, he resounds, but your Agnostic is like a cotton bale: your shaft sinks in noiselessly and unresponsively. But cotton bale or not, I had advanced too far in my contention, or rather presentation of fact, with Billings to stop short at this point, and besides there was Mr. Flannigan, Esq., gloatingly waiting to see an Agnostic and an Orangeman skinned alive, as he was apparently sizing up the situation in his own mind.

"No, Billings. Original Sin is not a disease inherited from Adam. It is a forfeiture of something immensely precious, a disinheritance which has befallen us as a

result of the transgression of the Father of the Human Race. There are two meanings to the phrase 'Original Sin.' The first meaning is the actual sin of Adam, the first or original sin. The second meaning is the effect or result of that sin upon his descendants, upon you and me and every other son of Adam. It is this second meaning that we are talking about. Now man in Adam was not only created perfect man, that is, physically, mentally and morally perfect in the natural order—all his powers and faculties in their fullest capacity and in perfect balance, the lower in complete subjection to the higher—but his Creator bestowed upon him gifts over and above this natural integrity, gifts and prerogatives in no way due to his human nature."

Billings was looking at me with his mouth pursed a bit and his brow lifted slightly, as much as to say, "You are talking through your hat. All this is pure assumption."

"I am not asking you, Billings, to accept what I am saying at this moment. I am only pointing the way to the explanation (the only explanation that fits the facts) of a situation which you have admitted. Let me give you an illustration which may help to a better understanding. A great king places a man and his wife on an estate, over which he gives him dominion. 'All this is yours,' says the great king, 'to have and enjoy in its fullness, save in one instance. There is a certain tree whose fruit you may not eat, and your abstinence from the fruit of this tree is the sign of your acknowledgment of my sovereignty. But if you eat of the fruit of this tree, and so transgress my prohibition, you shall be dispossessed of this estate, and you shall die the death. In addition, I bestow upon you

titles, honors, privileges and powers which are not derived from your tenure of this estate, and not native to your condition as holder of this estate, but superadded as my utterly free gift, over and above your right as lord of this, your demesne. If you transgress, all these things also shall be taken from you.' Now the man, in the folly of his pride, did transgress, and lost all, the estate itself, the privileges, titles and powers which had been conferred upon him in addition. He forfeited all these and subjected himself to death, from which he would have been free, had he been loyal. Such is a crude parallel of what happened to the first man in his original state; and all his descendants, under what may be called attainder of treason, suffered the same forfeiture. Adam, and in Adam all mankind—for he was head of the race—by his rebellion, lost the pristine integrity of his human nature; his intellect became darkened, his will weakened, his passions disordered. He also forfeited those special and supernatural gifts above his natural human integrity, namely, freedom from death and sanctifying grace. You will perhaps understand the latter term better if I call it the favor of God by which man spiritually participates in the Divine Holiness."

I paused here and looked interrogatively at Billings.

"That's the Catholic idea, is it?" he answered. "Well, it's all very pat and pretty, but of course I don't believe it. I think I understand what you're driving at. You mean that the result of Adam's sin is the disinheritance of the race from all the good things that Adam enjoyed."

"That's right," I said. "It's what we call the Fall of Man. This doctrine is the only key that fits the lock, namely, the ruined state in which we find man,

and all the ills that beset him. It is an explanation that explains. If you refuse to believe that man has fallen from a higher state and embrace the belief that he has evolved from a lower state, you are simply invoking a nightmare to explain a monstrous enigma. The whole course of history is strewn with the wreckage and ruins of nations, peoples, kingdoms and empires. Death has pitilessly scythed down every generation as it appeared. Under our feet are the crumbled bones of the countless hosts of humanity that have preceded us, and we too are about to descend in our turn into that charnel house of death! birth an agony, life a gradual accumulation of ills, with death as its ghastly seal!"

"What a dreadful and pessimistic doctrine you preach!" exclaimed Billings, his face screwed up in repugnance.

"No, not a doctrine," I answered. "I am only putting before you a fact, the universal fact, of some radical defect in human nature which all mankind has always recognized. I explain it as the Fall of Man, a disaster brought about by the refusal of the Father of the Race to accept happiness for himself and his descendants on a single and simple condition. You can't explain it. You and your Agnosticism fall back upon a dull acceptance of it as the natural order of things in a dark and dumb universe. You are the pessimist, not I."

"But I don't see how you escape," said Billings, "by calling it the Fall of Man, any more than I who simply say it is just things as they are."

"I am not trying to escape it; I am facing it, but I do want to know the why of it. It is understandable as the Fall of Man, but a horrible phantasmagoria as

the natural necessity of the world. You say that it is simply man as he is. I say it is not man as he ought to be and might have been, had he remained faithful. You aver that there is no escape from the fatality in which he finds himself enmeshed. I say that it is not a fatality, but a catastrophe, in which the original abuse of his freedom has plunged him. What's more, I say there is a remedy, a sovereign remedy, a remedy promised immediately upon his lapse, a remedy which has been fulfilled. That remedy is the complement of the Fall, namely, the redemption by God Himself, when God became Man and in the flesh took upon Himself the burden of man's sin and expiated his transgression by the supreme sacrifice of the Cross. This I know you don't believe, but it is the only reasonable explanation of the plight of man. Either you accept it or you reject it. If you reject it, you make the world a cruel shambles, and man the helpless victim of a dark and sinister power.

"The dreadful cost of working out the beast as you would account for it is not worth the possible result which might come about in some dim and remote future millennium, even if it could be prognosticated for a certainty. Such an idea is the most horrible speculation that was ever conceived in the minds of the floundering philosophers who seek to unravel the meaning of human existence without the aid of divine revelation. A millennium, which a remnant of the race may enjoy in some remote future, would be at the expense of all preceding generations. The toil, the sweat, the anguish, the agony of mankind throughout the vast tracts of time backward up to that moment would be the terrible toll paid for the privilege of the remnant still remaining. That remnant would simply

be dancing its jazz of pleasure on the apex of the pyramid of skulls which time past had built out of the long agony of humanity throughout the generations perished. No, Billings, the idea is monstrous and repellent to any sane mind. Besides, *you* would not be there, only your bones under the charnel heap. In such a philosophy there is no salvation for you—only a dubious survival for a distant remnant—and true redemption is for everyone. It is something worth thinking over. You know what Hamlet said about Horatio and his philosophy, and of all philosophies; Agnosticism, which is professed ignorance, is zero in the scale of speculation. It is not intellectual humility, as some pretend, but intellectual suicide. Agnosticism is not a philosophy to explain or point a remedy for the terrible times which you lament. The Agnostic can only shrug his shoulders and go away empty-handed."

The train had now drawn into the station. Billings departed without further comment.

"What's the good of wasting time on a fellow like that?" asked Mr. Flannigan, Esq., as he gazed after the retreating form of Billings.

"I'm not so sure," I answered. "When he reflects on what has been said—and he will think it over sometime—some glimmer may penetrate the darkness of his Agnosticism. At any rate, I could not let his attitude go unchallenged."

"That would be all right with anyone but a black Orangeman," answered Mr. Flannigan, Esq., as we separated in the crowd.

HEAVEN AND HELL

Hell is not a pleasant topic of conversation, though it may prove a salutary source of private meditation, for "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," and to the average mind the sanction of a breach in the law is the first thing that deters him. Now I do not think that Hell is a topic I should like to drag into a conversation, but sometimes topics are thrust upon us, and so it happened upon this occasion.

I was on the 8:30 going into the city one morning, when just in the seat ahead of me two commuters, each of whom must have got out on the wrong side of the bed that morning, began an angry squabble—what about I do not know. Their voices rose to a higher and higher pitch, and finally one, with an angry gesture and in a voice loud enough for almost the whole car to hear, shouted "Go to Hell!"

The gentleman who sat next to me, a fellow commuter by the name of Perkins, turned to me and smiled at the explosion of our neighbor in front.

"I wonder," he said, "when people will begin to stop using that infernal phrase which they employ upon occasions of extreme irascibility. I believe that in the course of time people will have forgotten all about Hell. It is already rapidly fading out of Christian consciousness, and I believe this superstition in a couple of generations will have altogether passed away, and people will no more employ the word 'Hell,' either as an outlet for their angry feelings or as a matter of

any concern to them, than we now use the Greek term 'Hades'."

Perkins' face was beaming with his own learning and his own superior intelligence as opposed to the ordinary and vulgar mind which might still indulge in the superstition of Hell.

"I can't say, Perkins, that I agree with your view of the future disappearance of Hell as an idea in the Christian consciousness or as a word in our vocabulary. At any rate, I can tell you this: There are three hundred million Christians throughout the world who *do* believe very staunchly in Hell and in whose consciousness this idea has not abated in the least. I mean, of course, Catholics. I admit with you that among non-Catholics, and perhaps the great majority of them, Hell no longer has any significance."

"Well, I should say so," answered Perkins. "The world has become too enlightened for such a crude, barbaric and cruel notion. It was all very well for people in generations gone by, who had not reached the refinement of civilization that we have, to believe in such things; and I really think that for the common crowd a belief in Hell in the old days was salutary; it kept them in order, you know. But to every enlightened person in these days it is a most repugnant idea, a gross and horrible notion, especially as we have now learned to consider God as All-Love. How could a God who is All-Love thrust his creatures revengefully down into the chamber of horrors which is called Hell? That would be to attribute hatred and a thirst for vengeance to the God of All-Love, which, as you can see, is a contradiction in terms."

"I suppose then, Perkins, that you think of the three hundred million Catholics of whom I speak as

superstitious, ignorant and gross barbarians because they do believe in Hell?"

"Oh, I don't mean quite that," answered Perkins. "I suppose your belief in Hell comes along with other doctrines and is taken with them without any very specific acceptance of that particular doctrine itself; you simply take it in a lump with all the rest."

"Let us pass that over," I said, "and turn our attention to the particular doctrine of Hell itself. Your point is that a God, All-Love, could not thrust His creatures into such a chamber of horrors as Hell is usually pictured. But, *does* God thrust His creatures into Hell through a thirst for vengeance, as you put it? Might not there be some other reason for the sinner going to Hell? You are looking at one side of the medal; maybe there is a reverse side with another picture on it. And remember, that only sinners, and wilful sinners, are the proper denizens of Hell. It would be well, therefore, to consider what we mean by sin before we go any further into the question. Did you ever think of that point in relation to the doctrine of Hell?"

"No, I never did," answered Perkins. "Hell has so long ceased to be anything to me that I have practically forgotten it, except that I know it is a doctrinal nightmare which refined people cannot possibly entertain."

"Leaving the question of refinement out, Perkins, I think it might be well, before we discuss Hell, to find out what really underlies the idea of Hell. If you will stop to consider for a moment, you will find that sin is the underlying conception. Now, sin is an offense against the law of God, and the law of

God is the order of the universe. An offense against God, to be a real offense, must be deliberate, either by intention or implication. It must come from the free will of the sinner. This, of course, implies that man possesses a free will and is not a mere automaton. An automaton cannot do wrong. A brute cannot do wrong because he is not rational, but man can do wrong because he has a free will."

"Wait just a moment," said Perkins. "I am not so sure that what you are saying is true. When we begin to analyze human motives we finally come to a point where it is very difficult to determine whether a man is acting freely or under impulsion or constraint, and therefore is not accountable for his own action."

"There is no use, Perkins, of getting into a discussion of that character for our immediate purpose. We are talking about Hell, and if there is no freedom on the part of man then there is no such place as Hell or Heaven. To go wandering off into remote analyses of motives only leads to confusion when the question is a very direct and plain one. You know just as well as I do that you are perfectly free to act; that you could have stayed at home to-day and not have gone to the city, and that your determination to go to the city was *your* determination, no matter what the purpose you had in view. To use simple common sense, you know that every human being is a free agent in everyday life; he can do as he chooses. The whole world accepts and acts upon it.

"Now, I am about to say something that will perhaps startle you. It is the very opposite of your conception of the origin of Hell. I say that Hell was made by Divine Love. God is, as you say, the God

of Love, and because He is the God of Love He created the place called 'Hell.'"

As I expected, Perkins turned to me in utter bewilderment, and I could see in his face that he thought I was really crazy.

"Yes," I went on most deliberately, "Hell was made through love. Just recall what I said a moment ago about sin—that it is an offense against God and that the law of God is the order of the universe. Now, sin is the violation of that order, and if sin were to prevail and dominate the universe, we would have the finite will of the sinner thwarting the infinite will of the Creator, and of course this is intolerable in an ordered universe. By the bye, have you ever read Dante's *Divine Comedy?*"

Perkins screwed up his face a bit when I asked that question.

"Yes," he said hesitatingly, "at least I read a good part of the 'Inferno.'"

"I understand," I said. "You are like most people who start the *Divine Comedy.* They get into Hell and never get out of it. I admit it is a terrible and gruesome picture, but no one will ever understand the meaning of that picture as drawn by Dante unless he knows the work in its entirety, unless he also understands the 'Purgatorio' and 'Paradiso.' Well, if you have read as much as through the first three cantos of the 'Inferno' you will remember the inscription over the portals of Hell which Dante gives us and which struck fear into his soul as he deciphered it. I want to call your attention especially to one stanza of that inscription. The first part of the inscription declares that this is the portal through which one passes into the city of eternal woe, etc. And

now as to the stanza to which I want to call your attention:

> Justice the founder of my fabric moved;
> To rear me was the task of power divine,
> Supreme wisdom and primeval love.

"That is not a mere conglomeration of words. Dante had a meaning, and a very profound meaning, when he put that inscription over the gate of Hell. I would like you particularly to note the statement that *Hell was made by primeval love.* Now, primeval love means that infinite act of love by which God loves Himself and all that He does in creating the external world. The external world is, in a way, a reflection of Himself. As He loves Himself, He must love that which reflects Himself. The divine purpose in making the world was to bring back the world to God Himself as its consummation in His love. In order to do this the whole creation must be established in order. The Divine Love is an arrow cleaving time and space to its eternal mark, which is Himself. The course of the arrow is the order of the universe.

"But when God made the rational creature He made that rational creature free; otherwise the rational creature would not be rational. It is in the freedom of the rational creature that the possibility of sin lies or the possibility of deflection from the order established by the Divine Will. Sin is the disturbance of that order and comes from the perverse will of the rational creature inordinately seeking its own end in preference to that of the Creator.

"There are two elements in sin: One the turning away from the imperishable good, that is, God; the other the turning to the perishable good, which is

the creature. Now, when the free agent prefers the perishable good to the imperishable good he is breaking the order of the universe. This aversion from God is the essential or formal element of sin and the turning to the perishable good the material element. Now, Hell is the place where justice exacts the penalty that ensues from this aversion from God, the penalty of preferring before God something which is less than God, preferring the finite good to the infinite good. This is no doubt a novel view to you, Perkins."

"It certainly is," answered Perkins. "Of course I do not believe a bit of it."

"I am not asking you to believe it, Perkins; I am only endeavoring to explain to you the Catholic meaning of Hell which you say is deliberately opposed to your notion, but which I believe can be shown to be perfectly logical and consistent with the idea of God as love. In fact, if God were not supreme love there would be no Hell. And here let me call your attention to the story of the Garden of Eden."

I saw Perkins smile at my mention of the Garden of Eden and I knew what was in his mind—that the Garden of Eden was only a childish fable of primitive man. No doubt the verses of the Rubaiyat so contemptuously flouting the garden and the snake were running through his mind.

"Whether or not you believe the story of creation and the fall of man as it is narrated in Genesis, I want to point out to you how it links up with the doctrine of Hell. Just be tolerably patient until I get through and lay your skepticism aside for the moment.

"You remember how Genesis tells that God created the world in six stages and rested at the seventh

stage, and looking out upon His handiwork saw that it was good? That meant it was in perfect order, that it was as God intended and would remain so unless it were disturbed by a perverse will. Now a perverse will did come into the world—that is to say, a will that refused obedience to the divine order and preferred its own way. Whether or not that perversion came through the temptation of the Devil in the form of a snake is not the question now. All that I want to establish is that the First Man did turn from God and sought the perishable good in preference to the imperishable good.

"It makes no difference to my point whether that perversion came about by eating of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge or what was the character of the perversion. All I want to say is that Adam, the creature, set his finite will and his finite preference over against the Eternal Will. Sin then entered into the world, and what was perfect order ceased to be perfect order inasmuch as sin had violated the order originally established by the Divine Will. Of course you might say, 'Why did God allow Adam to sin or break that order?' I can only answer that God made Adam a rational creature, and therefore free. Although with the frightful possibility of sinning, a creature with free will is much better than an automaton. In fact, man cannot be a free creature and an automaton at the same time.

"You see as I go along that a number of cognate questions arise, but we cannot stop to discuss them here, as that would divert us from my main purpose, which is to show that Hell was made through love and not through hatred. So far, we have got to this point: that the order of the universe was terrifically

disturbed by the assertion of the finite will over against the Infinite Will. Now if the finite will were allowed its untrammeled way as against the Infinite Will, we would have the Infinite subjugated by the finite. In other words, the sinning creature would be stronger than God. At the same time we must remember that even the Infinite Will cannot coerce the freedom of the creature, for that would be to deny the very essence of rationality, and God cannot contradict Himself. This primal sin of Adam is what we call Original Sin, and which we all inherit.

"Here, you see, is another question that crops up in this discussion. The fact is that if you were to examine into it, you would discover how every Catholic doctrine links in some way with every other Catholic doctrine. But let us keep to our immediate road until we have settled the question in hand.

"I am not asking you to believe all this; I am simply asking you for the moment to visualize the Catholic position. Besides the Original Sin which we inherit and which is cleansed by baptism, men commit what is called 'actual sin'; that is, you and I and everyone else can turn from God and seek the perishable good by preference, through the power of our will which God Himself could not encroach upon without denying His own nature. He made man free and man would cease to be a human unless he were free.

"You know, of course, that there is such a thing as evil in the world. You see it around you every day. Every man who looks into himself knows perfectly well that he sins sometime or other in some way. Besides, you find people who are constantly sinning and refusing to turn from their sinning. This is what I call a perverse will, and when that perverse

will perseveres in its wrong-doing and reaches the end of its mortal going and carries over its perversities into the other life, it is fixed in evil. That the superior order of the universe which God has provided against the evil wrought by the perverse will may be preserved, there must be some place to which that perverse will goes where it may be constrained from wreaking its perversities upon the rest of the universe. That is the place we call Hell, and in this place are confined all those wills fixed in evil, so that they may not erupt over into God's creation and destroy its order.

"God thus disposes of the perverse will fixed in evil for the sake of the preservation of the order of the universe and its final consummation in what we call Heaven. Perhaps you will the more readily understand what I mean if I draw an analogy for you. Human society protects itself from the evil will of the criminal by confining the criminal in some place where he is restrained from wreaking further disorder in human society. Just suppose we let all our criminals range at large and there were no penalty for crime. You can readily imagine the chaos that would result. Now, if human society finds it not only convenient but necessary to restrain the criminal will by confinement apart from the social order, how much more necessary is it in the universal order to restrain the evil will from the havoc it would wreak if left unrestrained!

"This analogy may help you to understand the tremendous moral necessity of some such place as Hell, or by whatever name you wish to call it. It was God's love of order and of the preservation of the final end of creation that caused Him to make Hell.

That is the reason that Dante says, in the inscription over the gateway of Hell, that it was made by primeval love. You will notice that he also says that Hell was made by supremest wisdom—the wisdom of God—who foresaw the fixed malice of the perverse will and provided a way to counteract the disaster of its otherwise unrestrained license. So you see that the Catholic doctrine of Hell is something utterly different from your own vague notion that it is a place where God revenges Himself by 'torturing His creatures in a chamber of horrors.'"

Perkins shrugged his shoulders as much as to say: "Well, if I accept your premise I should accept your conclusion, but I don't accept your premise."

"Now," I went on, "let us add another thing which may perhaps help you to a better understanding of my point. Your idea was that God thrust sinners into Hell. He does nothing of the sort. The sinner gravitates to Hell by a moral gravity. He goes there simply because he has chosen to go to Hell, not that he chooses evil in itself, but because his moral nature is so weighted down by its load of sin that he simply sinks to the place where he really belongs by a specific moral gravity."

"Your position," said Perkins, "seems to have some logical ground, granting your premise, namely, the creation of a rational creature with a free will who prefers evil to good."

"No, not exactly that, Perkins. No rational creature prefers evil to good. What he does is to prefer the lesser good to the higher good. No man can seek evil in itself. Evil is only a deprivation of a due good. Let me explain. Something which does not belong to a being by its own nature is not due it. For

instance, it's no deprivation of sight that a stone cannot see, but a creature who by its nature does possess eyes and the power of sight is deprived of a due good if, in any way, he loses the power of sight. In the moral order that holds good also. The rational creature has the faculty of knowing and possessing moral good. If he prefers to choose the lesser good and for the sake of the lesser good surrenders the higher good which is due him, he has deprived himself of what should belong to him and therefore suffers evil. Let us take a specific instance. Sobriety is due man as a rational creature, but if he surrenders sobriety for the sake of the inordinate gratification of his appetite for liquor, he has chosen the lesser good and loses the higher. Or, take another instance: A man says, 'I refuse to obey the Ten Commandments because I want to indulge myself in many ways which those Ten Commandments forbid. It may be that he has no ultimate intention of continuing in his evil course, but nevertheless does, under the urge of his sensual appetites, and never turns from those perishable goods which feed his appetite, but dies in that condition, without ever having turned back again to the imperishable good. He dies then in what we call 'mortal sin.' He is in that moral condition which finds its final term at last in the state of perdition, or Hell."

"But even so," said Perkins, "isn't the picture of Hell as a place of torture a most horrible and ugly conception? Take, for instance, Dante's 'Inferno.' I was reading the other day a book by a distinguished English critic who, while he lauded Dante as a supreme poet, declared that the literal meaning of the 'Inferno' was to him 'the most abominable super-

stition that has ever bothered humanity.' Now, that's exactly what I think, too, not only about Dante's picture of Hell, but about the general conception of Hell."

"Naturally you agreed very thoroughly with your critic, Perkins, because he was agreeing very thoroughly with you. He, like you, was criticizing Hell as a place of divine revenge instead of, as I explained to you, a place of divine love where malice is forever confined against the possibility of destroying the order of the universe. He, like you, shudders at the horrors of Hell as depicted by Dante, at its hideousness, at its supreme ugliness, but I think that if you look a little closer at the matter you will find that was just Dante's intention. He purposely pictured Hell as hideous and horrible because he was desirous of bringing home to the reader the horror and hideousness of sin in its effects. Of course Hell *is* horrible and terrible, since it springs from the very root of all disorder, the perverse will fixed in its evil forever. You should also remember that the literal Hell which Dante pictures for us is only the concrete image of the deeper horror of the spiritual disorder which comes from spiritual malice. Rest assured of this: no soul is in Hell except by its own perverse choice. Order is proportion and in proportion lies the secret of beauty. When you get disproportion or malproportion you destroy beauty and create ugliness. Evil is supreme ugliness and the eternal effect of evil is that supreme ugliness fixed forever.

"Let me put it at another angle for you. Dante says that the object of the human intellect or the rational creature is intellectual good, which is truth. The highest truth is the supreme good or God, all truth and

all goodness. Now the attainment and possession of that supreme good on the part of the rational creature was the purpose of creation, and when the rational creature reaches the end—which is the consummation of his being in the embrace of the Divine Love—he has reached his eternal destination in perfection, and that is what we call Heaven. To know God face to face, to see Him as He sees Himself, is eternal beatitude. The intellect then knows God as supreme truth and possesses Him through the will as supreme love. On the other hand, the failure to attain that beatitude by a perverse will fixed in evil is the supreme loss of the rational creature, and that loss is the very essence of the state which we call Hell. Man was made to know God, and to forfeit that knowledge by a false choice is supreme misery. The essence of Hell is not the concomitant punishment which results from that loss, but the loss of that intellectual good. What Dante literally depicts in his Hell is the concomitant punishment of the lost soul, which is the reflex of the essential loss of the knowledge of God. It is a terrible image because it is a terrible spiritual affliction—the most terrible that can come to the rational creature.

"You will note, if you read the 'Inferno' carefully, that the punishments following upon the essential loss of the knowledge of God are diversified. There are varying degrees of punishment according to the gravity and character of the sin. In other words, you will find that the punishments fit the crimes. The greater the crime the heavier the punishment; the lighter the crime the lighter the punishment, and that is but justice. This is indicated by the various circles of the 'Inferno,' from the topmost circle down

to the lowest and narrowest. You, of course, think of Hell as a place of fire and brimstone, which has always been, more or less, the vulgar notion of the penalty of Hell. Now while the opinion of theologians is that the main physical punishment of Hell is, in some way, fire, the Church itself has never defined that point, and one is free to draw the picture for himself. And that is what Dante does. In fact, in the lowest Hell of all, at the very bottom, the physical punishment of the souls there, where the most malicious of all sins—pride in the shape of treachery—is punished, is intense cold. The souls are there described as fixed in ice, the rivers of Hell emptying their waters into this lowest pit of all, and are there congealed by an intense cold. The souls of sinners there are steeped in this ice in proportion to the degree of pride which was their spiritual destruction. Some stand with only the ankles covered; some stand in the ice up to the midriff; some are totally immersed. The imagery here is symbolic of pride, for the proud man is self-sufficient and fixes his will upon himself as the very center of the universe, cutting all else off from himself. He gets what he has chosen, himself alone. Throughout the other circles of the Inferno, the symbolism of the punishments is a hideous image of the nature of the sin. The lustful are whirled about by circling winds which never allow them rest, just as their passions in their mortal lives blew them about restlessly. The souls of suicides fall upon the rocky soil of the seventh circle of Hell and there grow up into barren trees from whose branches the semblance of their bodies is hung. They have wilfully deprived themselves of their bodies, and their punishment is to have the bodies constantly before them and yet

never to possess them. All this, of course, you will say is horrible, and it is horrible, and meant to be horrible. Dante's purpose was to show men that sin is horrible and to paint a picture so distressful to his readers, who are still in this mortal life, that they may turn from their inordinate love of perishable good back to the love of the imperishable good. He himself says that the purpose of the whole *Divine Comedy* is 'to remove those living in this life from their state of misery and to lead them to the state of felicity.'

"'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,' and the purpose of Dante's 'Inferno' is to instill the fear of the Lord in the sinner. Please notice that the fear of the Lord is not the whole of wisdom, but only the beginning of wisdom. The whole of wisdom is the love of the Lord, but the man steeped in sin has no love of the Lord and he must be led to it by the fear of the Lord from his state of misery to the state of felicity.

"You understand, of course, that nobody is constrained to accept Dante's picture, nor is Dante's literal picture necessarily a true picture. It is, however, a logical picture of the effect of sin. You are free, and anybody else is free, to draw his own picture, but that picture should at least be logical; it should be a sequential reflection of the spiritual havoc which sin makes in the soul. That is what Dante has done in a masterful way.

"But to fully understand the 'Inferno' one should know the 'Purgatorio' and the 'Paradiso,' for the end of the work is the crown of the work and really determines its entire significance. Hell was made by love for the purpose of conserving the order of the

universe in love to the consummation of love in beatitude.

"Now Dante in his 'Purgatorio' shows us how the arrow of love, deflected by sin, is brought back to the straight path which leads to its target. You remember, I just said a moment ago that the essential and deadly element of sin is aversion from God. Now, when the sinner in this life realizes the terrible nature of sin and turns back to God by true repentance, there is still in his soul the other element of sin, namely, the inordinate love of perishable good. It is in Purgatory that the inordinate love is cleansed away.

"The whole of the 'Purgatorio' may be summed up in a line which is sometimes ascribed to St. Francis of Assisi: 'Set Love in order, thou that lovest me.' The 'Purgatorio' is the setting of love in order, straightening the arrow of love in its flight to the heavenly regions which the soul cannot enter until it has been entirely purged of its inordinate inclination to perishable things. It is in the 'Paradiso' that Dante depicts the consummation of love when the arrow of creation is fixed in the mark that was originally aimed at by the Divine Bowman.

"The reason that what you call the 'modern Christian consciousness' has ignored Hell is because it ignores the terrible nature of sin. To be convinced of sin is the first step in the spiritual life. Not only has the modern mind ignored Hell, but if you look carefully, you will find that the idea of Heaven is fast fading from its vision. These things go together; Hell connotes Heaven and Heaven connotes Hell. When you talk lightly of waiving the doctrine of Hell you are really waiving all of Christianity.

In fact, what you call the 'modern mind' has shifted the entire basis of its belief. It holds neither to the doctrine of Sin or Heaven or Hell—or to God. Instead of spelling God with a capital 'G' it now spells science with a capital 'S.' It has cut out from its vision all the universe except the visible universe. It seeks to explain the world by itself. It is something like the Hindu idea of the earth resting on the back of a turtle, but it fails to explain what the turtle rests on. Your 'modern mind' has, in fact, become de-supernaturalized. It has become materialized and so narrowed that it cannot see beyond the horizon of the senses. It is not broad; it is not expansive; it is not liberal. To put it in an ordinary way, it does not see beyond its own nose.

"I said that essential Hell is the loss of the knowledge of God. Now Heaven is the possession of the knowledge of God, and it is this possession that Dante depicts for us in the 'Paradiso.' Don't imagine for a moment that Heaven, in the Catholic conception, has anything to do with harps and clouds, or the Swedenborgian notion of Heaven as a place where everyone gets that particular thing which has been his or her predilection on earth—such as beer or skittles. No, Heaven in the Catholic conception is the intuition of the Divine Essence, and in that Divine Essence knowing everything that the finite mind can know, not by virtue of its own natural power but by the added power of the light of glory which the Divine Goodness infuses into it.

"Now, inasmuch as God is the prototype of the whole creation, in seeing that Divine Essence in the beatific vision the souls of the blessed see all there is

to be seen, or can be seen, in that infinite ocean of being. Dante puts it this way:

> O grace unenvying of the bond that gavest
> Boldness to fix so earnestly my ken
> On the everlasting splendor, that I looked,
> While sight was unconsumed; and, in that depth,
> Saw in one volume clasped of love whate'er
> The Universe enfolds.

So you see the Catholic idea is the intellectual delight of completest knowledge and a possession of that knowledge not in the abstract, but in the possession of God Himself. That's no mean conception, is it, Perkins? Something I should think that would rather appeal to you; at least it ought to arouse your interest enough to look into it a little more than you have."

Perkins sat still, pondering a bit. I could see that he was very much surprised and intellectually disturbed. I saw also that, like most people who have not the faintest conception of the sublimity of the Catholic doctrine, he was somewhat stunned at the novelty presented to him. I can understand the horror of Hell entertained by the mind that has no conception of Heaven. In other words, partial knowledge on a question like this is really no knowledge. It is the old adage over again: "A little learning is a dangerous thing." Of course underlying all this is faith, but a reasonable faith, and Perkins and his kind have no reasonable faith; they are at sea without compass or rudder.

"I must confess, Doctor," said Perkins finally, "that our talk has been most interesting and that your presentation of the Catholic doctrine of Hell has taken me by surprise."

"I don't doubt it in the least, Perkins. I think you are somewhat in the position of the Cornish miner in years gone by, who, living always underground, happens to come to the surface of the earth and is utterly astounded at seeing the sun and the earth in its illumination for the first time."

Fothergill and I had rather an animated conversation one morning as we came into the city; animated at least for me, for Fothergill never stepped beyond the limits of the urbane and suave. He was what one might call a very nice man, polite and punctilious to a degree. He was all "sweetness and light," with the light a very soft twilight.

The subject of our conversation was an article which he had just read in one of the current magazines, and in which the writer explained what a religious man is. Fothergill had been quite taken with the article and, as far as he could become enthusiastic, held forth rapturously to me that morning on the train, urging me to read the article as the very best exposition of religion and the religious man that he had ever come across. I am afraid I was a bit cool to the proposition, for I had had experience before in reading articles in magazines which omnisciently solved the religious problems of the day. Almost invariably, when I had got to the end of the journey, I found that all four tires were flat. There had been much pumping of air into them as the journey progressed, but when you got to the end of it you realized that you had been riding on nothing but air, and that the air was now all out of the rubber cushions around the wheels which made the going so easy.

Still, upon Fothergill's insistence, I took the trouble of going to my Club, selecting the magazine in which

the article was published and reading it. What I found was what I had so often found in the treatment of such subjects in the secular magazines. I saw at once why Fothergill so liked the article. It fitted his temperament and his views to a T. The article was vague, nebulous, indefinite, gracious. It was—to use the same simile I indulged in a moment ago—like riding in a luxuriously upholstered limousine, equipped with the easiest springs imaginable and with well-inflated balloon tires, so that there was practically no jolt of any kind.

The author, at the very beginning, eschewed all definitions. He held that definition is a wall and has limits, shutting out more than it shuts in. To limit religion within a definition was, according to his idea, to cabin and confine it within a suffocating narrowness. This was his fundamental proposition and he built up his whole theme upon that premise.

Now, although a definition does limit, it focuses and clarifies. It is only when a thing is out of focus that it is indistinct, and the very idea of a definition is to bring it into focus. It is true that a definition does exclude other things from the focal point, but the process of defining has the supreme merit of making us see what otherwise we would not see, or only see out of perspective and proportion. The mental eyes as well as the physical eyes must focus to see clearly at all.

There was much rhetoric in this article on religion and the religious man, and some of it rather brilliant rhetoric, but the author hid more by his rhetoric than he expressed. Good rhetoric—that is, rhetoric that is organic with a subject—brings it out more sharply and completely. Irrelevant rhetoric smothers the meaning. Now the fact was that the author had no clear

and fundamental conception of religion at all. At the outset he declared that a sharp line must be drawn between religion and theology, though he never drew the line sharp. His purpose was to show that theology was an encumbrance to religion and really had no vital relation to religion. Now theology is nothing more than an explanation of religion and its content in the intellectual order, and answers the question: "What is it I really believe and why do I believe it?" It is no wonder that our author shied at definition.

Our author made a sweeping gesture in the beginning to put theology out of the field and soften religion down to a vague sense of "something universal," and man's relation to that "something." His euphonious sentences fluted prettily enough, but when one came to analyze them they were a soft voice and nothing more.

He also laid down at the outset that the mind of man broadens with the procession of the suns, and that "further light is breaking forth in our time, new ideas of the world and its law, new visions of the spiritual order and its ideals are at the door." He declared that "temples, altars, creeds, feasts, fasts and solemn ritual or words" are not religion. With the exception of creeds, it may be conceded that all these things are not religion, that is, they are not of the essence of religion; they are the outward expression and channels of the religious life. He then proceeded to define religion—inconsistently, I think, since he had already said that religion cannot be defined—as "the life of God in the soul of man," but failed to tell us what the life of God in the soul of man is. He wrapped a lot of words about it by telling us it is the "living truth by which we live," etc., which tells us nothing more than what he has

already said. He tried to define but failed to focus, and so left the entire scene blurred and indistinct. An indefinite definition is no definition at all, and the reason of the author's failure is simply that he had no distinct idea himself.

It is an easy evasion to wrap up vagueness in graceful words floating like toy balloons in a gentle atmosphere. I noticed eloquent passages of much rhetorical effect rather hiding the light than revealing it. The fog was plentiful, and although the fog was iridescent with the author's rhetoric, it was still a fog. This method of obscuring an issue in religious questions is the temper of the times—a blind groping after a vague something which is indefinable. To tell us that the "spiritual quality in humanity" is the "eternal mysticism," is merely to say that the spiritual quality in humanity is an insoluble enigma. It is this element in modern writing upon religious subjects which is so irritating and discouraging to one who has some intellectual grasp of the fundamental principles of life and thought. When a man tells me that religion is "eternal mysticism" he is simply feeding me with wind, and what I want is substantial food. The spiritual life requires substantial food just as much as the physical life.

Our author left God out of religion altogether, save as a vague word, although he set out with the statement that "the life of God in the soul of man is religion," and that religion is summed up in the phrase, "love one another."

What is meant by loving one another, and why should we love one another, and is that love of one another of the same degree and quality in every case? Am I, for instance, to love every other man as I love

my own father? Are children to love all other parents as they love their own parents? Am I to love the man on the other side of the world, whom I have never seen, with the same degree of fervor that I love my next-door neighbor? It may be that the man on the other side of the world would prove to be a lovable fellow, did I know him, and that my next door neighbor proves a very unlovable fellow, because I do know him.

To say "love one another" is an easy and fluent gesture, with the usual practical result that everybody goes his own way and forgets everybody else in the absorption of his own selfish interests. What sanction is there for that command and who imposes that command upon us? Just at this point comes in the most essential thing in religion, which our author altogether ignores, namely, the love of God. The Founder of Christianity solemnly ordained: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, with thy whole soul and with thy whole mind. This is the greatest and first commandment, and the second is like to this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments depend the whole law and the prophets."

I can understand how we are to love one another if we first love God with our whole heart, our whole soul and our whole mind. The first part of that injunction is the very foundation of religion, because it establishes the tie which binds us to God as the object of our whole love; and I can see very well how the second follows from the first, namely, the love of our neighbor, for my neighbor like myself is bound to God in love, and in that love of God we are bound to each other. Here is a solid basis. But if you take away the love of God as our first spiritual obligation, you cut from un-

der our feet the force of the injunction to "love one another." There is no reason to love one another if God is left out, for what are we to each other with God out of our lives and our hearts but just so many selfish human creatures left to scramble together. Man without God is, after all, only a superior animal seeking food and raiment in the struggle of life as best he can, and when it comes to a conflict between him and other animals of his own kind, the result is simply the survival of the strongest.

The second part of this injunction of love depends upon the first. We love God; therefore we love our neighbor, because our neighbor is like ourselves—the image of God. When, therefore, we focus the idea of religion, we are not contracting but expanding the idea of religion, even though we do bring it to a sharp point. Now, religion is the love and worship of God. Implied in that is the idea of rendering to God what is due to God as our Creator and our Father: God is our Father, and Christ, as the Eternal Son of that Father, coequal with Him and revealing the Father to us, shows us God as worthy of our love. He is Creator, who has brought us into being, and He is at the same time Redeemer, through whom we are restored as His children to the life of supernatural grace. In Christ we see the great and intense love of God for us. That was the revelation which the Divine Son came down from Heaven to manifest to us: Creator and Redeemer, whose love is so great that He takes upon Himself our own humanity and all the penalties of our sins. Here is the eternal reason for loving God. I can understand that, but there is no reason or sanction in the truncated injunction, "love one another," without the first and fundamental love of God Himself.

The empty ambiguity of loving one another binds nobody. It is like the ordinary and banal injunction, "be good." Why should I be good if I see more to be gotten out of life by being bad? When I am told "love one another" and when I am told "be good," I can understand the reasonableness of those commandments with the tremendous sanction back of it of the love of God. Cut away from that, the second commandment has no roots either in life or in reason. Of course it may be convenient to love one another and to be good under a given set of circumstances, but outside of mere expediency, which is a fitful and temporary makeshift, these injunctions have neither value nor force.

As religion is the love of God, innumerable things follow which our author brushes aside as inconsequential—temples, altars, creeds, rituals, sacraments, which take their only sanction from that love of God and are expressions of that love of God by the religious man—that is, the man who is bound by that eternal tie to God. Man lives in a visible world and must make himself visible in all his actions. He puts up a temple to God because he loves God and worships Him. He formulates a creed because that creed is an expression of his belief in what and who God is. His beliefs thus focused are intellectually apprehensible. He says that he believes in God as his Father in Heaven. This is a credo. He affirms that Christ is the Son of the living God; that Christ is his Redeemer and died upon the Cross for him; that Christ ascended into Heaven and shall come again to judge the living and the dead. These are definite declarations, and because they are definite, are creeds. Ritual is the coördinate expression of these beliefs—the expression of the way in which man worships God. His feasts and his fasts are also

ways of expressing his love and his worship of his Creator and his Redeemer.

All these things follow from the central Christian idea of what Christ is and fundamentally from Christ's own instruction as to how we are to love and to worship. They are not indifferent gestures but concrete and visible expressions of what Christ originally commanded. It is true that rituals may superficially vary, but substantially they are the same visible acts of worship. I am, of course, here speaking of the Catholic expressions of the Faith that were given to us originally by Christ Himself. Christ instituted a Church to carry on His mission—the mission of love and salvation. That Church is a visible institution and must make itself known visibly to men if they are to see it at all. The Church is an organic society. It has its head and its officials to carry out its visible functions. Man is not an abstraction but a concrete individual, and he must act according to his nature. In that divine society which carries on Christ's mission there must be law, order and regulation, and out of all this logically come the things that we call temples, altars, creeds, rituals, fasts, feasts and sacraments. To brush all these aside as of no importance is simply to destroy the visible evidence of Christ's mission.

Our author has a quarrel with what he calls "theology." Theology, he says, is not an essential part of religion. Now, theology is an integral part of religion. It is the intellectual explanation of what religion implies and means. Man as a rational creature naturally inquires into the significance of the things which he believes. To thrust aside theology as a futile endeavor on the part of man to realize the meaning of religion is to deny his intellectual life. Man is not

built in compartments; he does not love with one part of him and think with another. He loves and thinks in the integrity of his whole being, and his endeavor to understand his religion in the intellectual order is perfectly natural and sound. When he divorces his religious life from his intellectual understanding he is really denying his rational life and founding his religious beliefs on superstition.

The Church has built up a great science of theology for the simple reason that the Church is made up of rational creatures. That theological system is a proper guide and light. It is true that it is not necessary for the individual to know theology formally in order to be religious, but in the corporate body called the Church a system of theology is essential. It is not necessary in the civic order for the individual citizen to know law formally, but it is essential that in the corporation called the State there be a formal knowledge of the law and its application to the life of the citizen. The fact is that you will find among all Catholics a very substantial theological foundation. That theological foundation is to be found in the Catechism, which explains in brief the meaning of what is taught by the Catholic Church. Theology in our author's view is a mere superficial encumbrance, a constantly shifting view of the meaning of religion, of no permanent and established value. This simply reduces theology to what any man may guess about religion, and the guess of one age may be directly contradictory to the guess of another age.

At the same time, our author looks upon religion as an abiding and unchanging thing. What he calls religion is faith in "that universal something" which is indefinable. This is just the rock upon which he wrecks

his whole thesis. How does he know that this "something" is permanent if he does not know what it is? An indefinable "universal something" is only a phantom of meaningless words. It is for this reason that he declines to limit this "universal something," which, he says, is the center of religion, by a definition. In other words, he makes the very heart of religion so indefinite and vague that it is not susceptible of definition, and seeks to entrench his position by the assumption that "definitions limit and exclude." Of course, the undefinable is not definable, but the fact which he seeks to elude is that religion is definable and only understandable when it is definable. For this same reason he flouts theology and makes it a constantly changing thing, because it is theology that defines the nature of religion. He doesn't like theology because theology is full of definitions. Theology focuses our beliefs into sharp outlines. If theology is no part of religion as our author avers, then religion is what he really pictures it to be—a shapeless sentiment wrapped up in a mass of superficial verbiage.

It was the indistinct and nebulous character in the article which I have just been criticizing that captivated Fothergill. Fothergill is a very sentimental man, I know. His intellect easily flows over into his emotions, and he is what more virile men call "soft"—his head is as soft as his heart. The article which captivated him so is a lot of pretty sentimentalism. I say sentimentalism, not sentiment, because there is a distinction between the two. Sentiment may be hardy and substantial; sentimentalism is sentiment liquified into mush.

Now, the religious thought of the day, outside of the Catholic Church, is either a mass of sentimentalism or

a cynical skepticism or a hardened indifference. The article in question which so pleased Fothergill was a mass of sentimentalism to the *n*th power. It is just as hard to deal with it as with skepticism or indifference. When you attempt to grasp it, it oozes through your fingers like so much sticky syrup. It has neither shape nor solidity. Like Proteus, when you seize it, it becomes something else. That is the reason that it hates definitions. Our author, in his article, says many true things if taken by themselves, but in their context they are false things. It is true, as he says, that a man may believe and yet have little moral worth himself, but that doesn't affect the validity or soundness of his belief. It simply means that such a man doesn't put his belief into practice. The inference of our author is that the little moral worth of a believer whose conduct is inconsistent with his belief destroys the value of the truth of the belief. We see plenty of people around us professing a faith, but not living up to it. Many a man believes in the Ten Commandments but does not live up to them. Nevertheless the Ten Commandments are sound doctrine.

When our author tells us that religion is a "life of fellowship and ministering good will, uniting us with the stream of goodness that was in the world before we came and will still be flowing when we are gone," he is simply reiterating the nineteenth century platitude cradled by Matthew Arnold, that religion is a "stream or tendency toward righteousness." Such a basis for right thinking and right living furnishes no solid ground either for thought or for conduct. Real and effective religion must be so substantial that it can be grasped and held. Nobody can grasp or hold a

shadow, a mere "stream or tendency toward righteousness"—whatever that may be.

Modern thought has broken up into such vague, fragmentary and unrelated notions as these. Catholic thought alone has retained its integrity, consistency and solidity. It is not based upon subjective caprice, whim or emotion, but upon the solid, substantial teaching of Christ, who has revealed to us who and what God is. Catholic theology is the luminous explanation of those truths which Christ has revealed to us. It is not a mere "stream or tendency toward righteousness," but eternal truth revealed definitely and authoritatively by Christ Himself.

When I next met Fothergill, I told him what I thought of the article he had recommended to me.

"Too bad, too bad," he answered, "I thought you would love it; it is so agreeably written."

"Most disagreeably written, Fothergill," I answered. "It was merely an unctuous defense of the indefensible and that sort of thing smells to high heaven. I'd rather read a boisterous tirade against religion a la Bob Ingersoll."

Fothergill smiled and murmured again, "Too bad, too bad."

DOGMA AND AUTHORITY

I had a fellow commuter who was very fond of declaring that he always did his own thinking; he accepted nothing unless it were proved to him. Doctrine or dogma was anathema to him. He boasted rather loudly of being a freethinker, that is, one who is untrammeled by the thinking of other people and pioneers his way through the uncharted regions of thought—uncharted to him at least—and disdains not only the beaten track but even the blazed way of some hardy adventurer who has gone before.

My freethinking friend's name was Bompus. He was a compound of a belief in himself and of pose. I don't know whether he began with pose or a real belief in himself, but the result was a defiant attitude toward the opinions or beliefs of other people. If Bompus could not approve of them, they were no good. A man of this prickly disposition is not particularly lovable. As soon as he heard a statement or an opinion which didn't tally with his own way of thinking, he would bristle like the proverbial porcupine, with fretful quills standing out rather irritatingly, venting his wrath on anybody in his vicinity.

Now, I was pretty much the opposite to Bompus in this respect. I had regard for authority and believed in dogma, that is, in positive declarations delivered by the proper authority, or authorities, as true and valid. I had clashed with Bompus on several occasions and

whenever I met him I always fancied I could see those fretful quills rise menacingly against me. Naturally I avoided Bompus as much as I could and I believe he reciprocated my mood, but in spite of our mutual desire to escape each other we did once in a while get shuffled together, as it were, in the same compartment.

One afternoon coming from the city I got into a very crowded train and searched the whole length of it to find a seat, and it was not until I came to the smoker that I found a vacant one. I sat down in the empty seat without looking at its other occupant, when lo! after I had got myself comfortably arranged and had spread out my afternoon paper for the news of the day, I discovered that my companion was none other than Bompus himself.

We discovered each other at the same moment. I felt that I was in for it and immediately sensed Bompus' bristles sticking out belligerently.

We had just organized a Committee of Public Safety in our town under the urge of patriotism, which was then manifesting itself at one hundred per cent and more even (it was during the war) when Bompus suddenly plumped at me: "I saw in the paper, Doctor, that you have joined the Committee of Public Safety and are captain of one of the squads."

"That's perfectly true, Bompus, I am the captain of one of the squads. I believe that every citizen ought to do his duty in these times."

"It makes me laugh," said Bompus irreverently. "I think you fellows are hysterical. What in thunder could you do anyhow in case of an emergency? You've never had any experience; you're untrained and you're —many of you—old codgers whose place should be by the fireside with slippers on your feet, at home."

"I take it, then, Bompus, that you didn't join the Committee of Public Safety?"

"You bet I didn't," declared Bompus with emphasis. "I'm not the sort of a man who makes a fool of himself so easily. Outside of the fact that the Committee of Public Safety would be utterly useless if called upon to face an emergency, I refuse to give up my independence by putting myself under the control of somebody else. I flatter myself that I am of too independent a spirit to submit to that sort of thing."

"I entirely agree with you, Bompus, that you are of a fractious and rebellious disposition. You would never do under discipline and authority. I have heard you say before that you always do your own thinking and never allow anyone else to think for you."

"That's the fact," said Bompus. "And I never will, either. I don't believe in dogma or authority."

"What, precisely, do you mean by that?" I asked. "What do you think authority is?"

"The assumption on the part of one man that he knows more and is better than another man and has a right to dictate to him—something I entirely deny. No one has the right to dictate to me about anything."

"That looks to me a good deal like anarchy, Bompus. There's such a thing as law, a necessary thing, I believe, for social existence. Do you think that the town authorities here have any right to enforce the laws and make you and all other citizens conform to them?"

"I have to conform to the law under the menace of sheer force," said Bompus. "At the same time I don't believe in the principle of authority. I understand perfectly that living in a community we have to abide by certain customs."

"Well, that's some concession at least, Bompus. Why not, then, give a rational assent? It's not only reasonable to suppose that men, living in a society (for man, after all, is a social being) must conform perforce to what you call 'customs,' but *ought* to conform to them. It isn't only a physical compulsion, but a moral obligation, and a moral obligation ought to be fortified by reason. You and I and all other citizens conform to the rules and regulations of human society because they are necessary for the welfare of the community, and the welfare of the community, after all, is in the last analysis your and my individual welfare. Indeed, man perishes or at least, lives at the lowest minimum of life, unless he lives in a community. A man alone on a desert island, for instance, lives a most wretched and limited life. He has only himself, and only himself does not satisfy. Alone he either perishes or degenerates into animality. Now, out of the necessity of communal life arises authority, or the right of those who govern to enforce whatsoever regulations are necessary for the common welfare. You say that you repudiate the principle of authority. You may delude yourself into the belief that you reject it in theory, but the fact is that you cannot escape it in practice. It is much more sensible to accept it as a principle of security than to deny it as a tyranny.

"The fact is, our fullest freedom is guaranteed by law under the ægis of authority. You have a natural right to go about your business freely. Now let me take a very simple and everyday illustration. You enjoy the freedom of the streets, but without traffic regulations how could you move about freely in the streets? There is a regulation by which all traffic goes along the right-hand side of the road, and a further

regulation that, at intersecting streets, the traffic one way must stop momentarily in order that the traffic crossing may have an opportunity to move. Just take away those regulations, even in our small community, and you would have an immediate chaos and jam, in which you would be so entangled that you could not move either to right or to left. You see, therefore, that law guarantees your freedom of movement. Now, law can only be enforced by authority. Human society would disappear except for the regulation of law and the just right of authority to see that it is enforced."

"I do recognize authority as force and nothing else but force. I obey it only because I must."

"But that's just the point, Bompus. Back of authority, of course, is force—to constrain those who flout it—but it is a reasonable force. As we ride on this train we are under the authority of the railroad and its regulation of traffic, and unless there were the proper authority to see that these regulations are carried out you and I would not enjoy the liberty, as we now do, of going to and fro daily from our home town to the city. I don't see how you can get away, not only from the necessity of authority, but its acceptance as a reasonable thing. You tell me that you are quite capable of doing your own thinking and are independent of others in your conduct. Are you in fact? Just now, aren't the railroad men thinking for you? The railroad executive has thought out the system under which you travel. You yourself have neither the experience nor the knowledge to set this system going and to direct it to the end for which it is intended, namely, to convey you and me up and down this line, day in and day out, with the least risk of danger. So it is in your life as a member of the community in

which you live, you do not do your own thinking. It is all done for you and it is well that it is done for you, for you couldn't do it successfully for yourself. We are not independent beings but, on the contrary, essentially dependent beings. We depend upon the authorities and the regulations which they have drawn up for the common weal.

"Now, let us return to the matter which led up to our talk on authority. Under the conditions in which we happen to be living at the moment—war conditions—the authorities have the right to take such measures as will best conduce to the common safety. Under the authority of those who are especially empowered to look to that safety, we are called upon to help safeguard our own interests. It is perfectly proper, then, for the mayor and other officials of this community to organize this Committee of Public Safety. It is true that our officials have not coerced the citizens to join it, but the fact is they would have the authority to draft the citizens into such a body if they saw fit. As it is, it is just now a purely voluntary organization. The Federal Government has, in fact, exercised its authority by drafting men into the military service in this emergency—that is, when the nation is at war.

"I am just now talking about civil authority—the moral power of command, supported when need be by physical coercion, which the State has a perfect right to exercise over its members when the State is in jeopardy, either from external or internal foes.

"By the bye, Bompus, you are a married man, and have children. Do you exercise no authority over them?"

"Well, I do direct them under certain conditions because they don't know any better."

"Well, then, you're exercising your authority. Just because you do know better and because you understand that it is for their welfare you should direct them in their conduct. Now, aren't you, in a certain sense, in regard to the community at large, in just the same position your children are to you? The common sense of the community directs *you* when you don't know better and just because you don't know better. Furthermore, this direction, which is put into the shape of laws and regulations, is for your own good. Laws and regulations are the way in which the community says to you, out of its experience, 'You do this and you do that,' not simply for the sake of being despotic but for the sake of the good of each one. It has the right to so command you, and that right of command is what we call authority. You have the right to command the obedience of your children to such regulations as you may make within your own household for the good of that household and for the good of every member of it. Wherever you turn you will find authority the regulative principle of human intercourse. You cannot evade its sanction by calling it custom or saying that it ultimately rests on force or coercion. I say that any sensible man will recognize the wisdom of this.

"There's no human organization which doesn't depend upon that principle—towns, cities, municipalities, State Government, Federal Government and even private organizations, which are united for some private common purpose. You belong to the Golf Club, I know, because I have seen you upon the links. Well, there are rules and regulations there which you must comply with and which have the sanction of the governors of the Club, the constituted authorities of that organization.

"You say that you think for yourself. The fact is that, at every turn of your life, you are under the authority of somebody else's direction and somebody else's thought. The courts determine for the citizen what is the law and what is the application of the law, and though you may say that you comply simply because there is physical coercion back of it all, it doesn't make you the master of the situation nor does it give you the sole freedom of determining for yourself what is to be done under the circumstances. Now if this be the case in the material and social affairs of men in general just so much more is it the case in the spiritual life of man."

"Do you mean to say, Doctor, that in religious matters I am bound by anybody's authority or that I can't do my own thinking?" and Bompus bristled with his usual emphasis.

"It looks very much that way, Bompus, if you are at all logical and consistent."

"I know that you are a Catholic, Doctor, and that you Catholics are simply so many puppets that bow down to authority and slavishly submit your intellects to the dogmas of your Church."

"We do submit our intellects," I answered, "to the teachings of our Church, but not slavishly. We submit freely."

"Yes," answered Bompus, growing more and more emphatic. "You are simply hidebound by your dogma."

"What do you mean by a 'dogma,' Bompus?"

"Anything that the Pope tells you."

"Not anything, but only what he declares to be truth in faith and morals, and we accept his declarations there because we believe that he has the authority to so declare by virtue of the commission given to him by

Christ to teach all nations whatsoever Christ has commanded him to teach. I know that you as a Protestant do not accept this at all——"

"Wait a moment there," interrupted Bompus. "I am not a Protestant—I'm a freethinker. I don't accept the say-so or the authority of any church of any kind."

"Nevertheless, you are a Protestant in the wide sense of the word, for Protestantism is based upon the idea that every man has the right to make his own religion. You reject dogmas; so do most Protestants. The only difference between the Protestants and you is that they associate themselves together in groups which have more or less a common belief in certain religious formulas, while you are a little church unto yourself. I don't know what you hold in a religious way, but whatsoever you do hold is based upon the same idea as theirs, namely, that you reject spiritual authority. You say you don't believe in dogma. But there is some dogma I am sure you hold, that is, if you believe by dogma any assertion about religion that you believe to be true. Now, some men hold that there are three persons in one God. That, in the wide sense of the word, is a dogma. You may hold that there is but one God and one person. Both are declarations of belief arising from a personal conviction, but both are equally dogmatic in the wide sense of the term.

"But my idea of dogma is more precise than yours, because I believe that a dogma is, briefly, a revealed truth defined by the Church—and by the Church I mean the Catholic Church. A dogma in the sense that I use it is a doctrine defined by the Pope or by a General Council. Now, the Pope does not define secular

things and lay them down as dogmas. The subject matter of every dogmatic declaration pertains in some way to revealed truth, and what I am to hold as revealed truth must be proposed to me as revealed truth by the properly constituted authority whose office it is to define such truths. I think it is perfectly rational to accept such definitions of revealed truth about what I myself cannot know, because no revelation has been made directly to me. In order that I may know the revealed truth it must be proposed to me in clear and distinct terms; in other words, it must be defined. For instance, when the Church defined Papal Infallibility it formulated that doctrine in clear and unmistakable terms.

"When the Church defined Papal Infallibility in 1870 it clarified it to my belief so that I might have no doubts as to its extent and meaning."

"You say, then," said Bompus, "that Papal Infallibility was defined in 1870. Isn't that making a new doctrine, a new dogma?"

"Nothing of the sort, Bompus. Just remember that a dogma is not the announcement of a new truth or a new doctrine; it is simply the definition of an old truth or an old doctrine. The doctrine of Infallibility was always held in the Church but was not *defined* until 1870—not until the necessity of focusing the old truth had arisen—thereby making it so precise that there could be no mistaking what it really meant. Now, the definition of an old truth put into precise terms and marked off within its proper limits and proclaimed as a matter of faith by the spiritual authority in whose keeping such truths have always rested, is a dogma. Therefore, it must be clearly understood that

a dogma is not the invention of something new but merely a definitely formulated proposition of something old. If you knew the history of the Catholic Church you would find that the doctrine of Papal Infallibility was held from the very beginning. The Church was always regarded as the infallible mouthpiece of the divinely revealed truths which Christ had taught from the beginning, and so was the Pope as supreme custodian of the Faith when speaking as head of the Church.

"An old and generally accepted truth may be held and believed without any very specific definition of it for a long time. It is only when men become doubtful as to its full significance or limit that the need of defining it arises.

"What does the Supreme Court of the United States do when it decides the constitutionality of a law which may have been upon the statute books for a number of years but has never before been called in question? It specifically defines the law and declares whether it is or is not constitutional, and its decision is a decree, or a dogma—that is, a definite declaration by the properly constituted authority and therefore binding upon the citizens of the United States.

"If you as an individual citizen took it upon yourself to declare what is or what is not constitutional, your view would be binding upon nobody, not even upon yourself. Here is an instance where you cannot do your own thinking. You are not capable of interpreting the Constitution of the United States. You've had neither the training nor experience to do so.

"You imagine that you are a very independent fellow in doing your own thinking. You are nothing of the sort, because your own thinking does not go beyond

yourself and is in no sense binding. In other words, you have no authority to bind anybody else and you are the lone crow that flocks by himself. Again, if any group of citizens get together and determine for themselves what is or what is not constitutional, they are exactly in the same fix as you are—they have neither the experience nor the learning nor the capacity to interpret the Constitution, nor the authority to command anybody else to accept their interpretation. Private interpretation, you see, will not work here. There must be a properly constituted tribunal with complete authority and the right to command all citizens to bow to its decree, or dogma, and to employ physical force, if necessary, to carry out its decision.

"If this is so essential in the social order, how much more essential is a properly constituted authority in the spiritual order? The Catholic Church *is* that tribunal in the spiritual order which has been empowered and authorized by Christ Himself to decide what is and what is not of the Faith, namely, that body of truths and all their implications which He Himself revealed originally to His apostles. A dogma in the Catholic sense is nothing more than one of those truths definitely and definitively formulated in precise and unmistakable language, so that there may be no question or doubt as to the meaning of that doctrine. That's what we Catholics mean by dogma, and please observe that it is something quite different from your notion of a dogma. Your notion of a dogma is that it is simply a positive *opinion* held and asserted to be true. There is no authority back of such an opinion and its declaration and its subject matter may be anything that anybody pleases to make it. But our idea of a dogma is focused upon either truths directly revealed

by Christ, or implications growing out of these truths, declared and defined by the properly constituted authority which is the interpreter and guardian of that deposit of Faith left to us by Christ. Our position is perfectly reasonable. Yours is founded upon caprice."

"I prefer," answered Bompus, "to stick to my 'caprice,' as you call it. It at least leaves me free. I refuse absolutely to be dictated to by anybody else, especially in religious matters. I believe that freedom is better than certainty."

"All right, Bompus. Have it your own way, but remember that you take the consequence of your arbitrary choice. If you were going through an unknown wilderness—that is, unknown to you—what do you think the safe and rational way of achieving your purpose, of getting to your destination beyond, would be? Would you take a guide who knows every foot of the way and is sure to bring you out in the end safely, or would you plunge into that trackless region, relying not upon any knowledge that you have, but upon your very ignorance? You may say to yourself: 'I won't be hampered or dictated to by the tyranny of this fellow who assures me that he can bring me safely to the end of my journey. I'd rather be free than safe.' I think the result of your wilful choice would be the wolves picking your bones after you had miserably perished in the wilderness."

"Nevertheless, I'd rather take my chance under the circumstances you describe. I never have been and never will be dictated to," said Bompus with ringing finality, as we left the train together. I could almost see the bristles sticking out all over him as he took his way home.

He had an automobile waiting for him. I noticed that he took the right hand side of the street, as the traffic regulation dictated. Independent automobilists, who refuse to recognize authority, are either behind the bars or in the cemetery.

OUR HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND THE AGES OF FAITH

We have an historical society in our town. I believe that almost every community of any size in the country, especially when it calls itself a city, manages to beget an historical society. Most of these societies, I understand, devote themselves almost exclusively to local history, interested as they naturally are in their own origins. I think this is an admirable thing. It fosters local patriotism and expands knowledge a bit beyond the town limits, for town origins have their roots elsewhere. That helps to broaden the local mind a little bit beyond the provincialism which is apt to settle upon it.

Now, our town boasts the name of "city" and in point of fact is far beyond the numerical limit within which, I believe, the State Legislature has conceded the name of city. If I remember rightly, ten thousand population makes a city in our State, and we exceed that some three times. Whenever a federal census is taken, we refuse to accept the figures and then take a local census of our own which is much more elastic. Whereupon the local paper comes out in a strong editorial, declaiming against the rank injustice which has been done to us by the official federal figures. One's own arithmetic is so much safer than the other fellow's.

Now our historical society, while primarily keeping in view local history, at the same time indulges in addresses from its own distinguished members and visitors, who leap over local limitations into national

bounds and even venture into the vast sea of universal history. One of the reasons for this larger outlook, I take it to be, is that some of the members of our historical society are metropolitan in mind, because, while they live in our town, they do business in the great city nearby. This gives a sort of cosmopolitan aspect, although I have heard it said that there is no mind more provincial than that of the denizen of a great metropolis.

Take Boston, for instance. The Boston mind gets into the habit of thinking that Boston is the hub of the universe, and so fixes itself upon the hub—as a Buddhist monk keeps gazing upon his navel—until your Bostonian sees only the hub and ceases to know there is even a rim. The New York mind, I am told, believes that the world is bounded on the east by Brooklyn, on the west by Jersey City, on the north by Harlem and on the south by the Battery. I do not mean to be cynical; I am simply stating what I have heard from other people and would not want to put myself down as an endorser of these concentrated opinions.

I myself belong to our historical society, though I do not take any very active part in it, being too busy with other matters. Nor do I attend the meetings of the society very often, but it happened one evening that I was present at a meeting where a gentleman from the great metropolis within such easy commuting of my home town gave an address upon Medievalism. He was a professor of history in one of the metropolitan institutions of learning. It was not such a bad exposition of the subject, excepting that the speaker looked at what is commonly called the medieval period of history with entirely modern eyes.

He had a pretty good superficial notion of the times about which he was talking, but he was constantly measuring the people of that age by modern standards. First of all, he kept calling those ages the "Middle Ages" and assumed that the people of those centuries thought of themselves as middle men. Now this is one of the most flagrant mistakes that could be made in attempting to size up a period of history which is remote from our own times, and for that reason—since the past cannot answer back—is regarded as an easy mark for modern professors.

I take it that real historians ought to be men with sufficient imagination to put themselves, as far as possible, in the other fellow's place. It's a good rule, even in everyday life, and conduces to soberer judgments. The modern man has an advantage over the fellow born some centuries before him, because he is standing upon the eminence of his own period and therefore has a wider perspective of things in general. I should say, then, that there are two things essential to writing honest and fair history. The first is that the historian knows how to project himself into the age about which he writes. He must have enough imaginative sense to feel, think and see as nearly as he can as the people did in the age which he is considering. He must understand and appreciate their circumstances, their environment, their point of view, and look at their world with their eyes as best he can. Unless he can do this he has no true historical sense. On the other hand, while he makes due allowance for their conditions and circumstances, he is perfectly right in bringing to bear critically upon their times the fuller knowledge which his own age puts at his disposal. This combination, each in due proportion, I think makes the ideal his-

torian. Above all, he should not allow his prejudices or his preconceptions to distort the objective facts.

Another point I may mention here is that he must know how to go about getting the *objective* facts, and that is by no means such an easy task. An immense amount of history—or what is called history—has been compiled at second and third hand, and there are historians who enjoy a vast reputation who, upon analysis, prove to be only second- and third-handers. They take their information from people who have gathered it from others, and these others in their turn have gathered it from still others whose supposed knowledge is far from first hand, and which when put to the acid test fades away into mostly fiction. Footnotes at the bottom of the page too often stand in place of facts. It is much easier to make a reference to somebody else than dig out the facts for one's self, and, a thousand to one, the reader accepts the footnote as a bit of unimpeachable erudition not to be questioned by ordinary mortals.

The gentleman from the metropolis who discoursed upon Medievalism before our society that night did not have this ideal equipment for getting at historical truth. He made a great show of impartiality, but it was, after all, nothing but "front," or what I would call historical "bluff." Not that he wasn't perfectly honest in his point of view, but because he really didn't know any better. He did give some credit to what are called the Middle Ages, but offset it with what was really a lot of conventional criticism, owing to his lack of real knowledge and that sympathetic imaginative sense of history which makes it alive with human color.

I came near getting up at the time and making a

few remarks upon the paper just read, but the speaker was the guest of the historical society and I didn't want to get into a wrangle, which no doubt would have eventuated had I let myself go. So I sat quietly through the whole performance, alternately amused and indignant. After the meeting broke up, I chanced to walk home with the president of the society, who was going my way, and lived just a block beyond me. His name was Tompkins. He began by asking what I thought of the address. I started to ventilate my criticisms, which grew in point as we progressed, and by the time we reached my house we were pretty badly mixed up in an argument.

"Why not come into my house," I said to Tompkins, "and we can thresh things out. I really believe I can show you that fundamentally the speaker of the evening was entirely 'off his base.' "

Tompkins regarded himself as something of an historian. He had the reputation of knowing a good deal of local history, but how much more than that I had never been able to ascertain. Now, I never boasted of being anything of an historian, although I have read a good deal of history and forgotten much more than I have read. Still, I felt pretty confident that in the general knowledge of history Tompkins could not be very much ahead of me. The only difference between us was that he thought he was quite an historian and I knew that I was not. When it came to the history of the Catholic Church which, in reality, is the history of civilization, I knew that I had Tompkins beaten both ways, as indeed any fairly well-read Catholic has any non-Catholic. At least I knew this much: that as a Catholic I understood history from the inside, whereas I know perfectly well that the non-Catholic

mind has really no "inside information." It's like standing on the inside of a church and looking at a stained-glass window and standing on the outside of a church and looking at the same window from the street. On the inside the window is illuminated. On the outside it is only an opaque and formless surface with leaden seams. The illuminated window on the inside tells its story. The dark window on the outside is a jumbled blank.

I took Tompkins into my library where we seated ourselves after I had given him a cigar and a little something else to take the chill off. We at once resumed our conversation, or rather, argument, for that is what it had come to. Tompkins was in thorough agreement with the speaker of the evening.

"You surely don't hold," said Tompkins as we resumed, "that the Middle Ages were much above semi-barbarism? All historians tell you that!"

"Not all, Tompkins. There has been an historical school of recent years which has rid itself pretty well of the old prejudice against the Middle Ages and the Protestant tradition which, in its own defense, belittled and besmirched the Middle Ages. There was no justification for the Reformation unless the Catholic Church had become essentially corrupt and failed in its mission, which it could not do, if it were ever the true Church. The peoples who broke away from Christian unity in the sixteenth century turned their backs upon the Church and that medieval period during which the Church flourished most highly.

"Let me here call your attention to something which the speaker assumed to-night and which I see you are assuming also; it is generally taken for granted, with the result that it gives a completely false aspect to

that period of history which is commonly and erroneously called the "Middle Ages." You and the speaker to-night look at that period through entirely modern spectacles. You call the Middle Ages 'middle' because they seem to be a middle epoch between two other distinctive epochs that stand out very sharply in your mind, namely, the period which lies between the Roman Empire and what you call the Renaissance. You focus the Roman period very intently and then you focus even more intently the period which you call 'modern,' and which you date from the sixteenth century up to our own day.

"The thousand years or so that lie between these two sharply focused epochs you conceive as a valley of depression, a tract of time sunk in darkness, a middle age between two heights of civilization—one Roman and the other modern. Besides the blunder of imagining this era to be a lowland of darkness, you make another capital error by assuming that the man of that period looked at himself just as you look at him. You label him 'middle' and you imagine that he labeled himself the same way. He was no more middle in his own eyes than you are right now in your own eyes in regard to some future period from which the future historian may look back at our 'piping times' of progress. The fact is that the people who occupied that stretch of time really looked upon themselves as in the very van of history, as indeed they then were. They were the army of humanity in full march, advancing into the future, the very van of the world. You have no warrant whatsoever for supposing that they had any such mean conception of themselves as you have. Could they have foreseen you calling them middle men, they would have laughed you to scorn. In order to

understand them at all, you will have to put yourself in their place. How did they look at the world? How did they look at civilization? How did they look at the past and what dreams of the future had they? It is not fair to them to measure them by your distinctively modern tapeline."

"Perhaps there's something in what you say," admitted Tompkins.

"Well, that's some concession anyhow on your part, but that is not all. You look upon them as an ignorant people. You say that their knowledge was very limited; that their science was very crude; that their intellectual outlook was narrow and dark. In fact, you call their day the Dark Ages. Now, I'm going to challenge that. I say that they were not 'dark' at all; I say they were not as dark as our age. I hold that they had a much wider, profounder and truer conception of the universe than the modern man has, and by that I don't mean merely the physical configuration of the universe, for on that point they were wrong. Nevertheless, they had a highly elaborated scientific theory of the physical universe which fitted the facts as they saw them, a theory that was well coördinated and carefully worked out and held valid among scientists up to the seventeenth century. They thought that the earth stood still and that the sun revolved around the earth, whereas we have accepted the theory that the sun stands still and the earth revolves around it. But outside of their scientific error upon this point, I hold that their outlook upon the universe was deeper, more intense and ennobling than ours. Religiously, morally, aesthetically, their ideals were a thousand times loftier than ours. While modern science has vastly enlarged the spaces of the universe around us and shrunk our

little planet to an almost insignificant size amid the vast astronomical systems which it has discovered, it has shut up our minds in a narrow prison house whose confines are in reality just as insignificant as our petty conception of the earth.

"I think it was Chesterton who said that modern materialistic science—and that's the main character of the science of the day—shuts up the mind of the scientist in a cell—a padded cell.

"Physically the medieval man looked out upon a universe which had not the vast reaches in space that appear to us, but spiritually he viewed a world of infinite depth and height. It is true that he conceived of the firmament above as consisting of a number of spheres revolving around the earth as a center, and whose extent outwardly in space was not as great as the circumference of the earth as known to us to-day. But beyond that physical limitation he saw the infinite empyrean beyond space and time as the presence chamber of the Supreme Being. While we have immeasurably expanded the physical universe, we have immeasurably contracted the spiritual universe.

"You think that the medieval man was a degenerate creature who lapsed into barbarism after Roman civilization had waned. You further conceive him as a barbarian who erupted over into the Roman Empire and brought his barbarous customs with him—crude and more or less shapeless. That has been popular history up to recent times—history founded more upon prejudice than fact. You will, no doubt, be very much surprised when I assert that medieval man was nothing of the sort—that the barbarians did not erupt so numerously into the limits of the Roman civilization as to stamp it out. This is a new point of view of history

which is obtaining vogue through the researches of modern historians who are getting at the facts and seeing things as they actually were."

"Well, that's the most startling theory that I ever heard," exclaimed Tompkins. "Do you mean to say that the Middle Ages were not barbaric but civilized?"

"That's what I'm driving at, Tompkins. When I say they were civilized I don't necessarily mean that they were civilized in the sense in which we use the term civilization nowadays, namely, the intricate civilization of machinery and commerce that has caught us in its steel mesh; but that they were civilized in that much higher sense of the word, which means *right living and right thinking.* I don't expect you to accept that very simple definition as complete, but the fact is that is really the essence of civilization. If you will analyze it you will find in it all the qualities that make for mental and moral health. Right thinking means seeing things as they are in their essence, estimating the universe for what it is, not simply as an immense machine under the push and pull of merely materialistic forces, but as an orderly arrangement by a higher and guiding mind to a definitive end. Right thinking also leads to a proper estimate of ourselves, who and what we are, whence we are and whither we go. The right comprehension of that lifts man out of the padded cell. This was the view of the man of the Middle Ages. He saw the world as the handiwork of God and he saw the mind of God in His handiwork directing, arranging and leading back to God. He saw himself as a rational creature from the hand of God, destined to go back to God as a rational creature, immortal and eternal. Now this is the view of what I call the truly civilized man. He has a definite purpose in life and he

directs his life according to that definite purpose. He sees that he lives in time for eternity and that time is nothing more than the vestibule of eternity. Here is something that I want to bring out rather emphatically: the modern mind, the materialistic mind, has made this life in time the be-all and the end-all, and consequently the universe around it to be a mechanical process in which it counts merely as a cog. This modern view has reduced men to mere ephemera. They live but for the day, even though they might live for a hundred years—for a hundred years in the vast process of mechanical time which he calculates in billions and billions of years is as nothing. How utterly insignificant then is the individual—that is, the individual who has no light beyond his little span of time, after which light fails!

"Now, let's go back to the medieval man's idea of himself and see what an immensely larger world he lived in. It was of utmost value to him because, however short might be his years, nevertheless in those years he was making a choice which, though brief, was endless. You see in this view time is charged with all the fullness of eternity. Every thought, word and deed were related to an immortal issue. No matter how small the physical universe might appear to him, he broke through it. Indeed he was taller than the stars, and the abysses of space could not confine his spiritual energies. But we, in our day, if we accept the materialistic view of the universe and cancel out the supernatural, are a mere swarm of gnats crushed in the pitiless wheels of the immense clockwork of the universe. Naturally, under this conception, life is really not worth the living. Time means nothing but the gradual agony of getting out of it. You see, that

brings us to the old Buddhistic doctrine that living is evil. Now the medieval man thought living was good, that life was really worth the while because it had a value beyond the brief span between mortal birth and mortal death. And this leads me to a second thought which I think will run exactly contrary to your own.

"Instead of being an apathetic creature who lived in laziness and sloth, the medieval man was the busiest sort of man that you can imagine. He did not live so fast as we do, but he lived much more intensely than we do and much more truly than we do. If you could just brush away from your mind that film of prejudice which false history has spread there like a cataract over the eye, you would be better able to see the point that I am making. Let me put it this way: Let us take ourselves at this very moment of our lives. We both learn that we have a mortal disease under the attrition of which our lives will be ground out in death in something less than five years. I am supposing for the moment that you don't believe in any future life at all, that you think when you die you cease to be utterly. I believe that, upon the hearing of this news that your span of life has been shortened to less than five years to come, the outlook would seem rather doleful to you. That would be a rather depressing notion, wouldn't it? You would simply say, 'Well, what's the good? I have lived a certain span of years and there's nothing more left for me.'

"At least, that's what the average materialistic man under those conditions would think. Now, on the other hand, take myself, or anybody else you wish, who looks upon this world as I do, as a prelude to another world, the issue of which is to be determined by my conduct here; what would I say upon such an

announcement of the short span that was left to me? I think I should say to myself, 'Heigho! but I must be up and doing and doing the best I can, for there is little time left and it is very precious and I must make good use of it. There are many things that I want to do and those many things have importance because I am going to carry with me out of this life the results of my accomplishment here.' Now the man of the Middle Ages was in just the position in which I now am, and the modern man is in just the position in which you are after hearing that woeful verdict of a shortly imminent death. The modern man says—that is, if he thinks at all—'It's not worth while to bother about the little bit that is left me and I will do one of two things: I will take whatever I can get out of this life in any way I can. That's logical. I will eat, drink and be merry, for to-morrow I die; or I will give up entirely and let myself drift along hopelessly.'

"I said that the medieval man was a very busy man, and he was very busy just because he realized the value of time in view of his immortality. What, then, did he do during his short span of life here?

"First of all he saved what was good in the old Roman civilization and transmitted it to us. The medieval men were the people who, amid the break-up of the pagan world, still held on to what was valuable in it. Our system of law was taken over from the old Roman system by the men of the Middle Ages, but what was better than that, they spiritualized that entire system. As it stood it was a dead structure, and the men of the Middle Ages put new life and higher life into it. That was a great achievement to their credit. Another thing, while they saved for us the

organized character of law from Rome, they created an entirely new political structure just the reverse of the old pagan State. The old pagan State was based upon the idea that the State is absolute, and the individual, except as one of the multitude, nothing. You know that under the pagan structure there was a vast mass of degrading slavery. The medieval man, keeping his eye upon his immortal destiny, lifted the individual to a plane transcending the absolutism of the State. His idea of the State, and this he carried into effect, was that the State was the servant of the citizen, just reversing the Roman idea that the State was absolute master. This idea of the State is our idea of the State and we get it from medieval man. The idea of political freedom which we regard as the cornerstone of the modern State was not of our fashioning but has been handed down to us from the medieval man. This is another great thing to his credit. And let me remark here that it was not until after the Reformation that the doctrine of the divine right of kings, which makes for political absolutism, obtained in Europe among the peoples who had seceded from Christian unity."

Tompkins stared at me in utter incredulity.

"Why," he exclaimed, "I thought the doctrine of the divine right of kings was something that had come from the Middle Ages and that the Reformation was just the movement that counteracted it."

"Well, Tompkins, you are wrong on that point, historically upside down. The political ideal of the Middle Ages was that the State was in the service of the citizen, but when the rebellious peoples against Christian unity cut themselves off, they erected the fetish of the divine right of kings. There had been a long struggle throughout the ages between the secular and

spiritual power, the secular power always endeavoring to appropriate to itself the spiritual power. This the Church, during those long ages, constantly combated. Now, after the Reformation, the secular power became the spiritual power; kings became popes. There is no stronger evidence of this than England under the absolutism of the Tudors and the Stuarts. You will find in every European state, where unity with the papacy was lost, that the secular and spiritual powers were merged into an absolutism. To the credit of the medieval men stand, then, both the spiritual and secular liberties of mankind.

"Again, the man of the Middle Ages made the modern languages. Latin was dead as a living tongue because Latin civilization had perished and the dead tongue of Rome was unequal to the new life that was sweeping over the people of Europe. With the new languages came the new literature, created and built up by the medieval man. The new literature was founded upon an entirely new ideal from that of the pagan classics. The new literature was founded upon the Catholic ideal of the dignity of man and his spiritual freedom. Our various modern literatures, as they have developed, would have been incomprehensible to the ancient pagan world, as indeed they are incomprehensible now to the pagan world that lies outside of Christendom. The heart of the spiritual ideal is that man is free and has the power of choice, brief but endless. Cancel that idea in modern literature and it collapses. This is another thing to the score of medieval man.

"It was medieval man also who built up the nationalities of Europe. Nationality is the result of the freedom from absolutism which came in under the inspira-

tion of Catholic doctrine. Nationality is the fruit of the self-development of each people's peculiar genius under the different circumstances which obtain in diverse environments. Without pursuing the subject into its details I simply want to say this: the Catholic ideal, which determined the character of the peoples of the Middle Ages, consists of two elements, one the idea of an essential unity, the other of ample freedom for the fruition of the differences which naturally arise among peoples of distinct temperament and environment. Unity in variety is the vital principle of life and applies in every direction—in art, in literature, in morals, in politics and in the intellectual life.

"If you take away that freedom which is essential for the expression of differences, you get sheer monotony. Likeness without difference results in stagnation; difference without likeness becomes disintegration. Unity in variety and variety in unity is the vital principle of growth and development. That was the fertile idea of the Middle Ages which has given us the thing we call 'nationality,' wherein each people may become itself according to its particular genius. In this way each different people contributes its peculiar genius to the advance of civilization. Here, then, is another thing that is due to the Middle Ages. By the bye, Tompkins, have you ever been to Europe?"

Tompkins said that he had made a trip several years ago.

"I suppose you went to the Continent and made grand tour?"

Tompkins said that he had.

"You must then have seen the wonderful churches of Europe, especially the Gothic churches, the great cathedrals. I suppose you duly admired those wonder-

ful structures. Now, if you will stop to think for a moment, you will discover that those great buildings were put up by medieval man. What sort of a man do you think he was who was capable of building so wonderfully, beautifully and magnificently? He must have had some brains and some artistic sense. You must credit him with knowing the science of architecture in a supreme way. What is more, that Gothic structure was an original creation in the most magnificent architecture that was ever conceived and executed by the human spirit. We have done nothing like it ourselves. Again, you must have gone through the museums and art galleries of Europe. What about painting, sculpture and the ancillary arts? Surely you can't think that the people who did all this so wonderfully well, better than we have ever been able to do it since, were mere barbarians, steeped in ignorance and darkness?"

Tompkins was by this time quite bewildered by the enumeration of all the great things the men of the Middle Ages had done, but he came back at me.

"At least you must acknowledge that those ages were very crude and cruel. Didn't they torture people, burn them, rack them, and do all sorts of horrible things which to us are loathful?"

"Yes, they did do a great many things that we don't do, but that doesn't mean that they were barbarous. If you remember, the Roman civilization, which we look upon as a wonderful civilization, did exactly the same thing. The Romans tortured people to extort evidence from them. They treated their slaves as mere chattel and killed them at pleasure. The Romans were both crude and cruel in many ways. I suppose you would consider a person very unrefined and unciv-

ilized who, after gorging himself at a meal, would take an emetic to rid himself of his overburdened stomach in order that he might be able to eat again just as plethorically as before? Yet you call the Romans a civilized people, and the people of the Middle Ages barbarous, who eliminated slavery, gradually did away with serfdom and did not practice the debased gluttony of the Romans. I am not saying that the Middle Ages were perfect. Their methods of punishment were crude and cruel, intolerable to us to-day. But I do say that they had a vigor, a strength and a purpose which inspired them to use all the instruments they had at hand to make life better and nobler. They may not have achieved everything, but they did build the foundations of our civilization strong and secure, and these are the foundations that underlie all that we have worth the while. Take for instance the family as we know it. The medieval man conceived the family as indissolubly one. He did away with the dissolute and degrading idea of woman which had come down from Roman civilization, and placed woman upon a pedestal of chastity and veneration. He made human love a sacred thing. He enshrined it in a sacrament. Has not the modern world sunk far below that conception under the pressure of the materialism of the hour? You imagine of course that freedom began with the Reformation. Well, just look around you now and see how mechanical and fatalistic the world has become. Just carry out the materialistic notions of the day to their logical conclusion, and where do you end? Now I think, Tompkins, that as an historian you have not really faced the facts."

I called Tompkins an historian. I really did not think that he was an historian but only a dabbler in

the field, but when you charge a man with being something more than he really is and throw upon him the burden of being something more, especially when he has the vanity of believing that he is more than he really is, you have placed him in the predicament of either acknowledging his shortcomings or living up to his false conceptions of himself. Ten cases out of ten he will live up to his vanity. I was assuming all through our conversation that Tompkins knew a good deal more than he did, and he naturally accepted the flattering imputation. The consequence was that rather than expose his own ignorance he accepted what I was imputing to him.

Tompkins went home that night a bit puzzled, for our talk had opened up a view of the world which was really new to him. His was the ordinary, popular view which has been propagated by prejudice, passion and ignorance. I know that it is rather a sweeping statement to accuse our modern world of being an ignorant period, but the fact is, the people who call the Middle Ages "dark" see them dark only because they see them in the darkness of their own ignorance.

It is a happy augury that there is rising an historical school which really seeks to face the facts. I felt that I, though no historian, had really done a good work and helped along the good cause of truth by putting in the mind of Tompkins, the president of our historical society, a view of the world which, if he would only consider it seriously, would forever after preclude him from accepting as history the kind of stuff which the guest of the evening had imposed upon our home-town audience.

The talk between Tompkins and myself was a very little affair, a mere trickle, but it is from numerous

trickles that great rivers come. A trickle here and a trickle there makes a rivulet, and numerous little rivulets finally commingle and make the channels of great rivers which come down from the hills and flow back again into the sea. I believe in everyone contributing his little trickle whenever he can, and I believe in seizing every opportunity that presents itself. Tompkins was an opportunity that happened to come in my way. It may be that Tompkins, if he does seriously look into the real history of the Middle Ages, will also become a trickle and contribute his slender rivulet to the sum of real knowledge.

FRAGMENTS

What I have been narrating in previous chapters does not cover all my adventures as a commuter. I found a very surprising amount of curiosity in regard to the Catholic Church. I say curiosity, for excepting in very rare cases it was not a thirst for knowledge or enlightenment, but a mere inquisitive probing into my mind just to see what I would say. My interrogators were, as a rule, not really serious inquirers about what they did not know, but merely idle speculators as to what I might know. In fact, I found as a rule a very indifferent state of mind about religion.

Most of the people with whom I talked upon the subject held very nebulous notions, and their religious affiliations were for the most part a mere clubbing together with other people who held as attenuated and vague ideas as their own. What I found reflected the religious confusions of the day which had devitalized religious belief into bewilderment and indifference. Authority in religion was scouted and any definite creed impossible.

There were a good many other topics besides those I have already related which I discussed at haphazard as I went to and fro in my daily journeyings as a commuter. Many of these were trivial. Many were really worth the while, but if I were to put them all down on paper I would string out this story interminably. Some I should like to touch upon briefly, without expanding

them to those proportions which they actually assumed.

The Galileo Case

The Galileo question came up more than once. Didn't the Church persecute Galileo for telling the truth about the earth moving, that old figment about Galileo defiantly saying to the Inquisition, "The earth *does* move," after they had tortured and condemned him? All this was intended to show how much the Church was opposed to science. Of course, I put the story before my questioner as it really happened, namely, that Galileo was not *persecuted* by the Catholic Church, that he was not racked and imprisoned for a number of years in a vile dungeon, and further showed how a grain of truth had been expanded into a mountain of fiction. I explained that Galileo was summoned before the Inquisition not because he held to the Copernican theory of the universe (that the earth went around the sun)—a theory, by the bye, first expounded by a Catholic priest by the name of Copernicus almost a century before Galileo's time—but because, under the supposition, which was fair enough in his day, that the Copernican theory seemed not to be reconcilable with certain texts of Holy Writ, he sought to interpret these so as to make them fit willy-nilly into the Copernican theory. That was the substance of the controversy.

The Inquisition demanded from Galileo a retraction of his attempted interpretation of those texts of the Bible which were thought to be in contradiction with the geocentric theory of the universe, that is, the theory that the earth stood still and the sun revolved around it. Huxley, the great agnostic of the nineteenth cen-

tury, said after examining thoroughly into Galileo's case that he thought the theologians of the time had rather the better of it over Galileo. The scientists of the day were really the most obstinate opponents of the Copernican theory. The theory could be taught as a theory but was not to be taught as a fact. In other words, it was not scientifically established at that time.

The commuter who usually questioned me about this matter was himself a dabbler in science. His was a half-baked knowledge in science and an almost entire ignorance of history, a combination which never fails to bemuddle the Galileo question with all the facility of a playful kitten with a skein of yarn.

Prayers to Saints

I was asked about praying to the saints and the Blessed Virgin. Why not go directly to God? Why should there be any mediator between God and the individual soul? My answer to that was that Christ Himself was mediator, and inasmuch as God Almighty saw fit to give us a mediator in the Man Jesus, it seemed to me a perfectly obvious thing that the Divine Wisdom had shown us the way to approach the Eternal God.

On man's part, how was the individual to know that he had established a direct communication with God Almighty? Was it not a bit presumptuous on the part of the creature to think that God would reveal to him directly what God Himself saw fit to reveal only through His own Son?

As for the veneration of the saints and praying to them, we only did so inasmuch as they were the near and intimate friends of God. Even in our mundane affairs, when we want to approach one in a high place

and ask a favor of him, don't we go to his nearest friends and ask them to ask for us? Now, those very near friends of God, the saints, derive all their merit from Christ, and when we ask them to intercede for us we are honoring God in His friends, who are only His friends because He has deigned to draw them so close to Him by His grace. They are holy simply because they participate in His holiness.

Relics

Then there came, of course, the usual question: Why Catholics venerate relics. Here I had to explain, of course, that relics were things that had been sanctified by holy people. Catholics believe that in these things, which once belonged to holy people, there remains by the grace of God something of their virtue. We therefore venerate and treasure them not because the relics of themselves possess any virtue, but because there is associated with them the personality of eminently virtuous people. It is like the odor of flowers remaining after the vase is broken, as Tom Moore puts it:

> You may break, you may shatter the vase if you will,
> But the scent of the roses will hang round it still.

Again, there is a certain natural veneration of, and attachment to, the things that have once been the possession of those we have loved and who have passed away. What mother doesn't treasure a lock of the hair of her dead child or husband? Parents treasure the belongings of a dead baby, for instance. Eugene Field's "Little Boy Blue" enshrines in verse the very natural and fundamental affection which treasures whatever belonged to the dead child. It was only the other day that the papers recorded that the relics of

"Little Boy Blue" had been placed in a museum in Chicago, for the veneration of those who loved the sentiments of the poem and the poet. Mt. Vernon has become a shrine for the nation, where are preserved intact all the furnishings and belongings of Washington's home. "So you see," I said to my interlocutor, "there's a very natural foundation for this sort of thing."

It just happened that my interlocutor had a locket suspended from his watch chain. I asked him what was in the locket, and behold, it was a bit of the hair of his wife who had been long dead. Here was the veneration of a relic, a very natural and beautiful sentiment. You may call all this sentiment, but sentiment is really a part of us. We are human and therefore sentimental. This would be a very rusty and rickety old world, constantly breaking down, if it were not for the lubricating oil of sentiment.

Sentiment goes a great way in religion, but it has to be kept in check by common sense and sanity. The Church is a wise mother and always allows for human sentiment and indeed, appeals to human emotions in her ritual and her devotions.

Reading the Bible

I was asked why the Catholic Church forbids Catholics to read the Bible. My answer was that the Catholic Church does nothing of the sort. What the Catholic Church did do was to forbid its members to interpret the Bible as they pleased. In the second Epistle of St. Peter we are warned against private interpretation of the Bible and are told by the Apostle himself that many people read the Scriptures to their own destruction. "The Bible," I said, "is the word of

God, and is often difficult to understand, and the only mind in the world that could unerringly understand the Divine Mind as expressed in the Bible is the Church herself, guided by the Spirit of Truth. It is the Church that made the Bible and safeguarded it from false interpretations."

The Church and Education

More than once the stale objection was brought up to me that the Catholic Church was opposed to education. The answer to that demanded a pretty long explanation, and indeed I had some extensive conversations with those who alleged it. I went into the history of Catholic education as it unfolded itself throughout the ages. I instanced the catechetical schools in the beginning, and then the cathedral schools established in the early ages of the Church, the pursuit of education in the monasteries and the preservation of the classics by the Church throughout the turbulent times of the breaking up of the Roman Empire and the barbaric invasions. I showed that if it had not been for the zeal and solicitude of the Church for ancient literature, we would have no ancient literature now. It was really the much-abused monks who sheltered the ancient literatures and preserved the ancient manuscripts for us. I cited the institution of the Carlovingian schools and the great zeal and solicitude of Charlemagne and his monks for education in his day. I told about Alcuin whom Charlemagne brought from England to head his schools. Then I proceeded to narrate as briefly as possible the foundation and institution of the great universities, always under the patronage of the Pope himself. Then I told my objector of the development and growth of the great

system of philosophy throughout the Middle Ages, which has been called Scholasticism, as well as the great system of theology which went hand in hand with it. I also cited the great religious orders which were founded for the purpose of education.

In reply to all this, my interlocutor insisted that the Church to-day was opposed to schools and instanced, in this country, the Catholic opposition to public schools. I had to explain to him that the Church was not opposed to schools but simply to *irreligious* or *unreligious* schools, and that so far from being opposed to education, the Church had founded in this country a great school system of her own, where religion was taught along with all secular subjects. I had to explain that the first and greatest knowledge of all was the knowledge of God and His ways of dealing with men. I also went into the question of the effect of unreligious education; how it stunted and maimed the spiritual and moral growth of young people who, although they might be well instructed in secular subjects, had no real moral foundation. I also showed that mere intellectual culture did not make for moral character. Indeed, I pointed out how dangerous it was to educate the intellect alone, for a highly cultivated intellect without moral balance might be a very dangerous element in society. I also pointed out the laxity and dissoluteness in the world to-day, in spite of the vast system of unreligious education which we had established in this country. When the public schools were first established it was supposed that out of that system of education the citizens would be solidly trained to a respect for law and authority. I had only to point out how all that is now lacking. Respect for law, you might say, has almost gone by the board;

and authority, especially on the part of young people, is flouted and despised.

Divorce

In due time came up the question of marriage and divorce. Catholics, I was told, in spite of the fact that they were against divorce, really granted divorces. Instances were cited where divorces were granted by Rome. I had to explain that no authority on earth could dissolve a valid marriage bond. All that the Roman tribunal ever did was to determine in the matrimonial cases brought to them whether there had been a real marriage or not. All that happened in such instances was the declaration that a marriage was null and void if the evidence showed that there had been no marriage. But a once valid marriage cannot be dissolved by anybody. The Church has no power to do so. "What God hath joined together let no man put asunder" is the rock of her regulation of marriage. The phrase "what God hath joined together" implies, of course, that all the conditions are fulfilled which make the marriage valid. In my talk on this matter I instanced the fact that the Church refuses to dissolve marriages, even at the cost of the loss of kingdoms to her unity. The whole English Reformation came about as the result of the Church refusing to dissolve the marriage between Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon. There have been other instances in the history of the Church, as in the case of Philip II of France, who sought to put his wife aside in order to marry another woman, and did so actually, the Church compelling him under penalty of interdict to eventually take back the wife he had unjustly thrust aside. So not only does the Church refuse to dissolve a valid

marriage, but she protects a valid marriage from the usurpation of the secular power.

Salvation

One of the hardest things to get non-Catholics to understand is the question of salvation as held by the Catholic Church. It is quite natural for them to resent the Catholic attitude because it seems to put them out of doors entirely. One of my fellow commuters, when we were talking about this point, asked me one day, "Do you think that I will go to Hell?"

"Well," I answered, "that depends upon the way you are headed, and whether you persist in that direction to the end."

"Isn't it a doctrine of your Church," he said, "that nobody can be saved who is outside of your Church?"

I replied that that was the Catholic attitude, but that the Catholic position needed proper interpretation. We Catholics distinguish between two kinds of ignorance. One we call "invincible" ignorance, and the other, "culpable" ignorance. Invincible ignorance means that state of mind which can't see the truth either through an ineradicable prejudice or an insuperable lack of knowledge. A person with ineradicable prejudice is one who is so deeply biased and narrowed by his own limited view that he cannot see anything else. It is like a man looking through a small aperture, a keyhole for instance, whose limitation excludes everything else in the scene except what is visible through that small opening. We take it for granted that if such a person could see, he would accept the thing that is now unseen. We believe that if he is in good faith and that if he could see the whole truth, he would embrace the whole truth. Such a person is in what we

call "the soul of the Church." He wants the truth, the whole truth, and would accept it if only he could see it.

Then there is the other kind of ignorance which we call "culpable" ignorance. That is an ignorance where a person is not sure of his own knowledge and refuses to inquire further for fear that, in the new knowledge he might obtain, he would take upon himself some obligation which he does not want to accept. Let me illustrate: A man is in invincible ignorance of the contents of a letter which has been forwarded to him if that letter fails to reach him. A man is in culpable ignorance if the letter reaches him and he sees by the superscription, or the handwriting, that it is from a certain person who is presumably transmitting to him some information the knowledge of which he knows would be in some way hurtful to him, or would prevent him from doing certain things which he is determined to do, and he therefore leaves the letter unopened. His ignorance is culpable and he has no real excuse, as he has in the first instance. It follows, then, that a person in invincible ignorance, in good faith and in sincerity, who refuses to become a Catholic is really a Catholic without formally knowing it. The supposition is that he is not afraid of the truth and would gladly embrace it if he only knew the whole truth.

In the other instance, the man in culpable ignorance is wilfully ignorant and is not, therefore, in good faith and cannot be said to be "in the soul of the Church." God wants all men to be saved, but no man can be saved against his own wilfulness. A person who culpably rejects the claims of the Church is outside of the Church, and outside of the Church there is no salvation.

God will not refuse grace to anyone in good faith, but

it is essential that he must be in good faith It is often hard to say why people refuse to accept the Church. Their motives are often hidden from us, but we may rest assured they are not hidden from God Almighty. We do not judge of them, and we leave it to the justice and the mercy of God to deal with them. So, you see, my friend, I can't say whether you are in good faith or not. If you are in good faith and live up to your lights practically, you may rest assured that God will deal with you as you deserve.

A religion that is only partially true cannot give you the whole truth. Food which is partly wholesome and partly unwholesome cannot be the means of nourishing the body wholesomely. St. Paul has put the matter very pertinently. He says: "A man that is a heretic after the first and second admonitions, avoid; knowing that he that is such an one is subverted and sinneth, being condemned by his own judgment."

Efficacy of Prayer

Another subject about which I had more than one conversation with fellow commuters was the efficacy of prayer. How could God interfere with the immutable laws of the universe? Now, this objection was based upon the idea that the universe was a great machine which, once set going, could not be interfered with, the now obsolete idea of a purely mechanical universe which was handed down to us from the nineteenth century. I usually asked my interlocutor if the universe were as immutable as he thought, and on what grounds did he think the universe was immutable? Who made the universe? Either the universe had been and would always be self-constituted, or it had been created by someone who was more than the universe. Now, if

God created the universe, how was the universe more than God—that is, how was the creature more than the Creator? If God were omnipotent surely He was more than the material universe, which is nothing more than His handiwork.

I always tried to show the person to whom I was talking upon this question that he was between the horns of a dilemma: he must accept the universe as self-made or as made by a Power more than itself. If he stood on the point that the universe was self-made, how did he account for it? A self-made and self-sufficient being was all that a being could be. In other words, a self-made and self-sufficient universe was God, and if the universe were a mere, great engine, then mechanism was the supreme thing in the world. Therefore, every part of that mechanism was, as it were, merely a cog in the great machine. Man is a part of the great universe and therefore a mere cog, and if a mere cog, an automaton and without freedom. Such a view destroys human responsibility, and yet man always believed in responsibility—knew himself to be responsible and therefore knew himself free. In other words, the universal testimony of all mankind was point blank against any theory such as an immutable mechanical universe. If man reasoned to a mechanical universe, and his everyday experience and his common sense flatly contradicted it, you had a self-contradictory universe, for man is just as much a part of that universe as the whole material world. On the other hand, if you accept the view which reason does in fact sanction, and which the common sense of mankind has universally proclaimed and acted upon, you must accept God as the Cause of the universe and as the only self-sufficient Being, whose existence depends upon no

other being. Upon analysis this leads to the conclusion that the Creator of the universe, alone being self-sufficient, is omnipotent, omniscient and immutable, and that the material universe which He has created is mutable and dependent upon His supreme will. In other words, if He brought it into being and made it what it is, contingent and dependent upon His power, it follows inevitably that He can change its laws at will and that He alone can change or supersede His laws. When, then, in His eternal wisdom and His providence which supervises His own creation, He sees fit to answer the prayer of the rational creature called man, who is to stay Him from answering that prayer and substituting His higher and omnipotent will for what we call the laws of nature? God, being free to create, is therefore free to change, alter or rearrange the order of creation, for after all that order is simply contingent upon His will.

To pray to God, and to expect that He will answer them in His wisdom, is therefore a perfectly reasonable thing if our prayers are for our own good. Now, all mankind has recognized this and has acted upon it from the first primitive form of religion up to its highest form in the Catholic Church.

A man who makes machines can regulate those machines at his will. He can start the machine going, he can suspend its action and he can so alter it as to change its parts. Why, then, can't God Almighty do the same thing to this great mechanism we call the material universe? In the spiritual order in which man stands as the center, this holds all the more cogently. Man is free to ask and God is free to give. Therefore prayer can be efficacious. Divine Providence is God Almighty's supervision of His own creation;

and as He has made man out of love, He will readily respond to His creature's prayer if it be for his own good.

Evolution

In my various talks with all sorts of people upon religious questions I have always found that there is a fundamental philosophy, or view of life, lying back of their opinions. So far from the notion that belief does not affect life and conduct, I have found the very opposite to be the case. What most prevails in men's view of life—what can be called the philosophy of life—is the habit of accepting the current notions around them. They do not think the thing out for themselves, but accept somebody else's thinking. The mechanical theory of the universe which, I have just said, has been inherited from the nineteenth century—at least in the non-Catholic world—really dominates the thought of the average man to-day, and his religious objections come mostly from that root.

The notion of evolution as a mechanical explanation of the universe has obtained a very firm lodgment in the popular mind. The thing has been worked out for them and they accept it as a ready way of getting rid of any effort on their own part to think out for themselves what are called the problems of life. It is also an easy way to avoid certain moral obligations which are more or less onerous. If we are mechanically evolved from lower forms of life and are only higher animals, we are merely the last link in the chain of events; there is an end of it.

Now this is a mistaken idea even of evolution, for evolution is not necessarily pure mechanism. A man might accept the theory of evolution—and it is only a

theory—without relinquishing his religious belief. First of all, he can accept evolution and at the same time hold to a creative act of God in the beginning when all life was made potentially in an original primitive form. In fact, even to the evolutionists, this must be a first postulate, for they cannot conceive of self-creating life at the start. Again, a man can still be an evolutionist, that is, hold to a graded series of life in an ascending scale in chronological order, and yet believe in specific acts of creation all along the line of the development of life. This is, of course, not evolution in its strict sense. Evolution, properly speaking, is really Transformism, namely, the theory that one distinct species is actually evolved in whatsoever way one may imagine from a lower distinct species, as, for instance, man from ape, or other kind of lower animal. But the idea of specific acts of creation at proper intervals is perfectly consistent with the idea of an orderly development of life in the world, each higher kind of life progressively superimposed upon each preceding lower kind. But one might hold, without inconsistency, that the human body might have been evolved in preparation through the forms of lower animal life, and then, by a specific act of creation, the human being brought into existence by the infusion of the soul. There is nothing against faith in this view and there is nothing against reason. Reason and faith are only against the purely mechanical notion of evolution, and that notion is not necessarily bound up in the broader theory of evolution. I am not saying here that evolution is true or that evolution is probable or even plausible. I myself think it is none of these. It is a mere working hypothesis and by no means established. Indeed, I believe that there are some very sufficient

reasons against it, and one of these reasons is the "missing link."

If evolution be true there ought to be no missing links in the chain. Now, there are not only missing links in the chain, but the absent links are patently absent when they ought to be most conspicuously present. To imagine a chain suspended whose every other link is missing is assuming the impossible. There has never been discovered a single missing link anywhere along the line. The average man has accepted evolution as a simple and easily grasped mechanical process, and has never taken the trouble to work out for himself the alternative and perfectly reasonable conception of a graded series of life from lower to higher, with concurrent specific acts of creation as each of the various species appears in the course of time.

When we say a series of forms appearing from time to time upon the earth it looks plausible to the casual eye that one has come from the other, but I think a little closer inspection will show that there is no necessity of accepting that view of the process. Given a graded series of forms appearing from time to time, why is it not just as consistent to suppose that successively distinct species have been created in chronological order? If we were to take a series of buildings, from a crude adobe hut up to the most magnificent palatial structure, it would not necessarily follow that the palace was *evolved* from the adobe hut. The fact is, not that one has evolved out of the other, but that one after another has been successively posited by the creative mind of man. The fundamental structure of every one of these buildings is the same: the foundation, walls and roof; but the elaboration of simpler forms into higher forms comes from the human mind which

stands outside of the material in the buildings themselves. So, when we see a whole series of living structures, one after the other, and yet fundamentally the same in structure, why is it not just as reasonable to suppose that the mind which created the first, also created the second, third, fourth, etc., in due order?

Evolution looked at in this way is not inconsistent with religious thought and is perfectly congruous with reason. Religious difficulties arising from the contemplation of the evolutionary process disappear when the series of living forms are seen in successively specific acts of creation fitting in the chronological scale. If God can create the original form of life—and there is no other explanation of that form except by an act of creation in the beginning—why can't He create successive forms all along the line as we go from the first form up to the highest that we know? I have generally found that objections to the truths of religion, advanced by the advocates of the mechanical theory, come from their failure to rise to the conception of successive creation, the only hypothesis that really explains the facts and lightens the darkness.

Types of Mind

There are many non-Catholics who reject evolution out and out. These may be roughly classed as Fundamentalists, as they are called nowadays. People of this kind are rigid believers in the literal meaning of the Bible. We had a manifestation of that temper and spirit at the famous trial at Dayton, where William J. Bryan, a Fundamentalist of Fundamentalists, locked horns, as he thought, with the Devil and all his works.

I have met Fundamentalists in the course of my commuting adventures and I found them strenuous

and vehement upholders of the written Word of God as the sole rule of faith. Frankly, I have always respected their crude sincerity. They, at least, knew what they thought and thought they knew why they thought it. They were usually people of Calvinistic tradition, a Puritanical cast of mind which had been nourished upon the Old Testament more than upon the New. Their God was a rigid and exacting Deity, and they believed that they were his visible regents on earth to see that all mankind obeyed the law. They were great on inhibitions and prohibitions, especially upon the prohibition against liquor which has been slipped into our Constitution. The only way to meet them is to meet them on scriptural grounds. In their eyes, the Catholic Church is the Scarlet Woman still, and Catholics nothing but idolators and superstitious believers in the omnipotence and omniscience of the Pope. They readily acknowledge that the Bible is the inspired Word of God and, therefore, in talking with them, I generally based my argument upon the New Testament. I found that they invariably took texts of the New Testament from their context and stubbornly stuck to their own private view. Whenever I pointed out the utter hopelessness of basing arguments upon texts torn away from their context, they invariably refused to consider the New Testament as a whole whose parts were to be interpreted according to its entire spirit and purpose. To my argument that private interpretation of the New Testament leads invariably to contradictions, they always replied that each man was free to construe the Bible according to his own lights and that he would be guided by the Holy Ghost in doing so. I always asked them where they got the Bible, and usually they were nonplussed at that ques-

tion. When I pointed out to them that the Bible came from the Catholic Church, and that its canon was determined by the Catholic Church, they grew quite skeptical. Their idea of the Bible was that, like Topsy, it "just growed." They had no notion of its historical aspect or that there must be a living interpreter of a dead book, that is, a book that does not interpret itself. I pointed out that Christ Himself had never written a word of it, nor instructed His apostles to write a word. He Himself always taught orally and commissioned them to teach as He had taught. The Bible was not known to the early Christians as we know it, and in fact it was not until toward the end of the fourth century that the Bible, as we know it, was declared by its living interpreter, the Church, to be the true book of inspiration. Their general attitude to me was one of skepticism as to the truth of what I was saying. They looked upon me with suspicion. I was a Papist, and a Papist in their eyes had no standing in court whatsoever. In fact, the implication was that the truth could not be in a Papist. Their prejudice was intense and, to me, almost inexplicable. Yet it was there and reared what seemed to be an insurmountable barrier between my mind and theirs. Nevertheless it seemed to me that if that prejudice could be broken down, the Fundamentalist mind was ready to accept the truth, if only it could be brought to see the truth.

The Modernist mind was so open that it could contain nothing; it was like a sieve, as fast as anything was poured into it, the contents passed out through the innumerable openings at the bottom. The fact is, the Modernist has lost the religious sense, it seemed to me. The Modernist would often accept things as a premise, but stop there. His mind seemed incapable of travel-

ing fairly to a conclusion. For instance, he accepted Christ as a great moral teacher, but denied He was God. He invariably disclaimed dogma as a tyrannical imposition upon the freedom of human thought. Christ, he assumed, was a great and good man and the greatest moral teacher the world has ever seen, but when you tried to show him that Christ as a human teacher, no matter how great He might be, was either a faker or a man suffering under a tremendous delusion, he merely shrugged his shoulders. This inconsistency seemed to him to be an intellectual virtue. He was grounded on the idea that religion was a mere development of human consciousness throughout the ages and that what might have been true a thousand or two thousand years ago was not necessarily true to-day. In other words, religion was simply a product of the human mind, and it necessarily varied as the human mind varied throughout its history. The thoroughgoing Modernist escapes the logic of the situation by evaporating into rhetorical sentimentalism and vanishes in a cloud of words. I don't mean to say, however, that a Modernist is essentially insincere, but I do say that he is remarkably self-deluded.

I have met some Modernists who are frankly perplexed. They are the type of people who reject religion in its fundamentals, not because they don't want to know, but because they don't see their way to reconciling the difficulties which beset them with what they would really like to believe. I found these people more open-minded than either the Fundamentalists or your ultra Modernists; they are really at sea. Now, intellectual conviction often depends upon moral conviction. I have known non-Catholics who were fairly well convinced of the truth of the Catholic Church,

but were really afraid to submit. Prayer is what people of this type need most—to go down on their knees and ask for light and this is the last thing in the world they ever think of doing. It is really the only way out.

The human will is a very stubborn thing and even holds out against the light. I think the reason for this is that there is a good deal of intellectual pride among people of this kind. It is hard for them to submit. If they would only get to that attitude of mind which says, "I believe. O Lord help Thou my unbelief," I think they would soon come around. To break the stubbornness of pride is the main difficulty. Pride is the rock that has always wrecked humanity. It was through pride that Adam originally sinned. He wanted to be as God, knowing good and evil, and his descendants, under the burden of Original Sin still in their pride, want to be as God.

Now I am not a pessimist, but I cannot close my eyes to the condition of the spiritual world around us in this first quarter of the twentieth century. Outside the Catholic Church the world is in a spiritual debacle. The foundations of the spiritual life have been broken up. Spiritual authority has been abandoned and, as a result, authority in all things human and divine is at a tremendous discount. We see its dreadful effects in the family, especially as evidenced in the younger generation. We see it in the State and in the disregard for law, so prevalent around us. This breaking up of the spiritual life and its results in human affairs is often attributed to the Great War. But the Great War itself was only an enormous manifestation of that same spirit. The rejection of authority on a wholesale scale came about four centuries ago, and we in our day are only reaping what was then sown.

Christian unity was broken up by the Reformation because the Reformation rejected divine authority. That rejection has been running its course for the past four hundred years, and we will have to go through to the bitter end of the working out of that disintegrating principle. One might become very pessimistic if we kept our eyes only upon the conditions which we see around us, but we must take the larger and wider view of the situation. In order to look forward we must look back and learn from past history, which goes more or less in cycles, what we may expect from the future. The Church has weathered many storms and has remained intact. In the fourth and fifth centuries Arianism was a heresy even more widespread proportionately in the Christian world than is Protestantism to-day. Yet the Church came triumphantly through that perilous storm which would have wrecked any human institution utterly. The modern heresy of Protestantism in all its various forms is passing away. What we see around us is the flotsam and jetsam thrown up by its receding waves. For the time being we are amid the wreckage and there seems to be little salvage in sight. But the time will come, and I think the experience of history will show us, that all the religious negations which have come about in the shape of heresy must pass, as all negative things must pass. It is only the really constructive that endures. "All things shall pass, but my word shall not pass," said the Divine Founder of the Church. As long as we have that divine assurance there is no reason to be pessimistic.

A French writer of the nineteenth century predicted that the twentieth century would see the return of the peoples to the unity of the Faith. It begins to

look that way. The past twenty-five years have shown a much more rapid disintegration of Protestantism than has ever occurred in its history before. In spite of scientific skepticism and its resultant indifferentism, there is a good deal of inquiry from many directions into the spiritual and religious life. The outlook to-day is surely not more hopeless than the outlook in the beginning of Christianity. Rome was plunged in corruption, superstition and indifferentism in the first century of Christianity, and yet by the end of three hundred years Rome came to recognize the Church and granted her the freedom which it had denied for so long a time. If the Church in those days could leaven the corrupt mass of mankind, and build up itself upon the ruins of the pagan world, as it did, there is every reason to believe that it can leaven and overcome the neo-paganism of to-day, which has resulted from the failure and rapid disintegration of Protestantism in this, the first quarter of the twentieth century.

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